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ABSTRACT

This doctoral thesis is a study of the process of collaboration between Southwestern Oregon Community College and four selected social service agencies in southern Oregon for the purpose of developing an integrative social service and education delivery system called the One-Stop Center. Particular focus is on the interpersonal dynamics among the key stakeholders involved in a collaborative partnership. A qualitative methodology was used in order to study the personal experience of collaboration. In-depth interviews were conduced with a participant representing each of the collaborating organizations. A profile of each participant's experience was then developed from the interview data, and themes were synthesized from the profiles. Common themes included sharing a culture of helping; feelings of frustration with the current social service and education system; having a sense of readiness to change; working through the process; and building and sustaining a relationship. Conclusions include the need for participants in collaboration to have time to be together, to build a relationship through the development of trust and respect, and to commit to a common goal or vision that will sustain them through difficult times. (Contains 2 figures and 50 references.) (CB)

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A Phenomenological Study of Collaboration between a Community College and Selected Social Service Agencies

by

Kristen L. Crusoe

A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Kristen L. Crusoe for the degree of Doctor of Education in Education presented on June 15, 2001. Title: A Phenomenological Study of Collaboration between a Community College and Selected Social Service Agencies

Abstract approved: _____
George Copa

This is a study of the process of collaboration between a community college and selected social service agencies for the purpose of developing an integrative social service and education delivery system, the One-Stop Center. Particular focus is on the interpersonal dynamics among the key stakeholders involved in a collaborative partnership. The participants are a community college and four social service agencies located in southern Oregon. The social service agencies are: Adult and Family Services, Community Action, South Coast Business Employment Corporation, and AMBIT, a drug and alcohol treatment agency. A qualitative methodology was used in order to study the personal experience of collaboration. In depth interviews were conducted with a participant representing each of the collaborating organizations. A profile of the experience of each participant was developed from the interview data. Themes were synthesized from the profiles. Common themes were: sharing a culture of helping; feelings of frustration with the current social service and education system; having a sense of readiness to change; working through the process; and building and sustaining relationship. The conclusions point to the need for participants of a collaboration to have time to be together and to work through a process that builds relationship through the development of trust and respect. Also, it is important for participants to commit to a common goal or vision that will sustain them through difficult times.

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First, I acknowledge the participants in this study who shared their time, experience and insights into the collaborative process.

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Doctor of Education thesis of Kristen L. Crusoe presented on June 15, 2001

Major Professor, representing Education

Director of School of Education

Dean of Graduate School

I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Kristen L. Crusoe, Author

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Problem	2
Theoretical Framework	6
Interdependency of Systems	7
Autopoietic Systems	9
Summary	13
Chapter 2: Literature Review	14
Organizational Relations in the Post Modern Era	14
Collaboration	17
Planned Social Change	20
Summary	22
Chapter 3: Methodology	23
Locating Myself	23
Phenomenology	25
Phenomenological Interview	26
Profile	28
Selection of Participants	28
Data Analysis	30
Protection of Participants	32
Summary	32
Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion	34
Presentation of Participant Profiles	36
Participant #1 Profile	37
Participant #2 Profile	42

TABLE OF CONTENTS *(Continued)*

Participant #3 Profile 50
Participant #4 Profile 56
Participant #5 Profile 59

Major Themes 63

Sharing a Culture of Helping 64
Feelings of Frustration with the Current System 66
A Sense of Readiness to Change and Make Change 68
Working Through the Process of Collaboration 70
Building and Sustaining Relationships within the Collaborative Alliance 74

Relationship of Themes to Each Other and to the Theoretical Framework 76

Validity and Reliability Checks 83

Summary 86

Chapter 5: Implications 87

Basic Assumptions 87

Fostering Interprofessional Collaboration 91

Further Research 92

References 95

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

Figure 1. Diagram of theoretical framework. 12

Figure 2. Model for Newmark Center collaboration. 82

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated in loving memory of my sister, Robin Crusoe Rhodes.

A Phenomenological Study of Collaboration between a Community College and Selected Social Service Agencies

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation explores the meaning of the experience of collaboration among the key stakeholders in a college-community and social service alliance. In particular, this study focuses on the interpersonal processes that occur during the collaborative experience. What are the essential dynamics involved in establishing and maintaining a collaborative alliance? What is the nature of conflict and how is conflict managed? What decision-making and problem-solving processes are critical to the success of collaboration? And, what is the meaning of communication and relationship within a collaborative experience?

Qualitative research methodology was used to examine the experience of the collaborative process. The primary method used was analysis of in-depth, phenomenological interviews of a sample of key stakeholders in the collaboration. Selection of participants was based on gaining perspectives from the variety of social service agencies and the community college stakeholders.

The dissertation is organized into the following sections: (a) description of the problem and importance of the study, (b) statement of the theoretical framework, (c) review of selected literature, (d) methodology, (e) presentation of results, (f) discussion of results and implications, and (g) references.

Problem

The purpose of this study is to describe the problem of interprofessional collaboration within the context of the changing nature of interorganizational relationships and practices, particularly in the areas of education, health, and human services. Rigsby (1995) describes a need for new and different strategies relating to school-community connections. He describes the current relationship situation as having inherent problems due to the nature of the education, training, and work practices of the discipline-specific professionals that comprise the staff of the schools and public service agencies. Rigsby (1995) writes, "Integration of service programs require that professionals with different aims and priorities work together, be able to speak about problems in languages that foster joint efforts, and be willing to compromise some specific standards or expectations" (p. 9). The problem is how to move schools and social service agencies that have worked independently, as separate entities, to an integrated service delivery system based on collaboration.

The challenges facing adults, youth, families, and schools today come from a variety of cultural, economic, political, and health problems (Rigsby, Reynolds & Wang, 1995). Various human services are essential to meet families' and children's diverse, and often, complex needs (Daka-Mulwanda, Thornburg, Filbert & Klein, 1995). A significant development for the well-being of individuals, families and society is the effort to link education, health, social services and other supports that people need to live their lives in security and productivity. Not only does linking provide a more efficient way of delivering services, it builds and sustains community through the process of collaboration (School-linked Comprehensive Services, 1994).

Chin (1961) relates planned social change in the area of human relations incorporating three trends: interdisciplinary efforts in the social sciences, interprofessional, cross-disciplinary efforts in practice, and cross-professional efforts joining theory and practice. Lawrence (1959) identified the problem of fragmentation in the helping professions. His observation made in the 1950's is still very relevant today.

> How much ambiguity, contingency, ambivalence, confusion, and conflict can we endure without being individually destroyed or without destroying our social order is a very pressing question today. What can we do, if self-consciously aware and courageously prepared, we undertake to renew our disintegrating culture and to orient our confused social order guided by our enduring goal values, accepting this immense task as our share in the never ending search to make living more orderly, more significant and fulfilling of human dignity. This, I take it, is the basic problem we face when we approach this interdisciplinary frontier in human relations study where we wish to invoke the knowledge, the skills, the understanding of all the disciplines and professions to deal more adequately with this multidimensional problem with which no one discipline or profession can cope alone and unaided. (p. 43)

Trist (1983) refers to the necessary dialectic between the individual and the group, and between identity and community. He speaks of the need for collaboration as tasks become more complex and interdependent, as diverse specialists come together for relatively short periods of time to solve problems, as responsibilities become too complex for one persons' comprehension, new social inventions of collaboration are imperative.

The development of interagency collaborative health and human service programs can provide a high quality response to the problems faced by at-risk individuals and families (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1995). Goals 2000 (as cited in School-Linked Comprehensive Services, 1994) presents a national strategy for improving the health of all Americans by the year 2000 through the linking and integration of agencies and services which address the multiple and complex needs of at-risk students and families.

Kagan (1991) describes the problem of meeting these needs as a "domestic challenge" and states that the probability of meeting this challenge improves with collaboration. Collaboration facilitates a holistic approach to problem solving and "is this era's social experiment," according to Kagan (as cited in Daka-Mulwanda, Thornburg, Filbert & Klein, 1995, p. 219).

There is documentation of the need for collaboration. What has not been well documented are those activities and processes that happen in collaboration. What are the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for a successful collaborative effort and how does the process of collaboration affect the personal and professional lives of the people involved? Daka-Mulwanda, Thornburg, Filbert & Klein (1995) state that the "creation of a collaboration is a complex process requiring flexibility and restructuring of the social delivery systems" (p. 219). Gray and Wood (1991) ask the question, "What exactly is collaboration and how does it occur?" (p. 5). They further identify three aspects which are essential to understanding collaboration: (a) the preconditions which make collaboration possible and motivate stakeholders to participate, (b) the process through which collaboration occurs, and (c) the outcomes of collaboration.

This study focuses on the process through which collaboration occurs. The purpose is to add to the knowledge base and develop insight into the process of collaboration through an exploration of the experience of individuals involved in a collaborative alliance and the meaning attached to that experience. Gray (1989) emphasizes the importance of looking at process in order to gain understanding into how collaboration can best work. Gray writes:

> By viewing collaboration as a process, it becomes possible to describe its origins and development as well as how its organization changes over time. (p. 9)
>
> Envisioning interorganizational relations as processes rather than outcomes permits investigation of how innovation and change in exchange relationships can occur. (p. 16)
>
> The importance of process cannot be overemphasized in planning and conducting successful collaborations. Good faith efforts to undertake collaboration are often derailed because parties are not skilled in the process and because insufficient attention is given to designing and managing a constructive process. A successful outcome greatly depends on how the dynamics of collaboration unfold. (p. 93)

Rogers and Whetton (1982, as cited in Gray, 1985) criticize research on interorganizational relations because it focuses almost entirely on formal, highly quantifiable types of transactions, is historical, lacks a systems orientation, is insensitive to multiple outcomes and power distribution, is cross-sectional and is oriented to individual actors at the expense of larger systems dynamics. Gray (1985) asserts that a process-oriented approach is needed because "(w)e are concerned with the need for and the development of collaborative relationships within organizational domains, rather than with the role established domains play in controlling behavior of individual organizations" (p. 4).

Polivka (1995) writes:

> (t)he development and testing of theory related to collaborative community initiatives is a relatively recent phenomena... there are few systematic analyses of these efforts. Current research suggests that task characteristics, the environmental context, and situational factors are important precursors to the development of collaborative interorganizational endeavors while transactional variables are indicative of relational processes. (p. 114)

The aim of this study is to identify what the transactional variables and processes were that facilitated the development of a collaborative relationship

among the participants. These variables and processes included the interpersonal dynamics, such as communication and trust, involved in forming and maintaining relationships.

In summary, the essential problem that this study addresses is developing an understanding around the experience of merging and integrating multiple organizational and individual realities and transforming these separate realities into a shared reality. Within the context of interprofessional collaboration, individuals are expected to alter the basic assumptions, concepts, and meanings inherent within their professional reality, including the roles, relationships, norms, and behaviors that support this reality. Change of this nature requires intense effort, both rationally and emotionally. It is a subjective process, involving the interactions of people creating common, shared meaning and understanding. The development of a new social reality emerges from the social relationships and through the interactions of people over time. Through interaction, new assumptions, contexts, and meanings evolve.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework supporting this study involves two primary concepts: interdependency of systems and self-referential autopoietic systems. Sub-concepts underlying each of these primary concepts are relationship and communication. The purpose of the theoretical framework is to provide a context for the experience and to propose connections among events, structures, roles, and social forces that operate in peoples's lives (Seidman, 1991, p. 102). The purpose of this study was to gain understanding around the experience of individuals and agencies who had previously

operated independently and who were trying to develop an interdependent relationship with each other. It is one thing to create an organizational chart depicting the integrated service delivery system; it is quite another to actually live the experience. The theoretical framework of autopoiesis and interdependency of systems supports this study by providing a context for the dialectic between autonomy and interdependence.

Interdependency of Systems

The concept of interdependency of systems, in this context, refers to the nature of organizational systems as being open to their environment. This environment includes the task environment, involving the organizations' interactions with its clients, as well as the broader contextual environment. The broader contextual environment includes the local community, state, and federal government entities, regulations, and other social forces that impact the particular system's environment. Within this system are multiple subsystems, including the individuals who comprise the distinct professional disciplines. The environment and the multiple subsystems are understood as being in a state of interaction and mutual dependence.

Traditional organizational theory proposes that changes in the external environment present challenges to which the organization must respond, initiating internal change in one subsystem and rippling through all other subsystems within the whole system. Therefore, what we are dealing with is a complex situation in which each subsystem engages in these relational processes. The individuals, professional disciplines, departments, clients, and all others who interact with the organizational entity engage in these processes within the larger system: this is the collaboration.

Capra (1996) describes the emergence of systems thinking following work done by organinismic biologists Hamson, Henderson, and Woodger during the 1900's. These biologists moved from framing their study of living systems based on function to one based on organization. The shift from function to organization, according to Capra, represents a "shift from mechanistic to systemic theory, because function is essentially a mechanistic concept" (p. 27). Based on the work of these biologists, systems has come to mean "an integrated whole whose essential properties arise from the relationships between its parts, and systems thinking involves the understanding of a phenomena within the context of a larger whole" (p. 27).

Bateson (1972) described wholes from the ecological aspect of systems as evolving as complete fields of relations that are mutually determining and determined. Identity involves the maintenance of a recurring set of relations. The system's pattern has to be understood as a whole and possessing a logic of its own. Bateson emphasizes that it cannot be understood as a network of separate parts. It makes no sense to say a system interacts with its external environment. A system's transactions with an environment are really transactions within itself. Each system is actually a sub-system of a larger system. System and sub-system are constantly interacting, changing, and evolving.

Systems can evolve and change only with self-generated changes in identity. These self-generated changes may be initiated by random variations, chance interactions and connections, as well as intentional acts, which create a new set of relations within the total system. Thus, the changes are self-generated because they emerge from within the system, in reaction to external stimuli. Whether or not transformation will occur depends on the system's ability to transfigure a new set of relations and therefore create a new

reality or allow compensatory mechanisms to stifle change. In this context, transformation of a system is internally generated and involves the total system of interactions that are initiated externally. It is the whole pattern that evolves. "Conceptions of simple causality are just inadequate for understanding the dynamics of complex systems" (Morgan, 1986, p. 254).

Marilyn Ferguson (1980) writes that:

> Within the framework of General Systems Theory, relationship is everything. Each variable interacts with other variables so thoroughly that cause and effect cannot be separated. When things come together, something new happens. In relationship, there is novelty, creativity, and a richer complexity. Whether we are talking about chemical reactions or human societies, molecules or international treaties, there are qualities that cannot be predicted by looking at the components. (p. 157)

Autopoietic Systems

Maturana and Varela (1980) explain that living systems are characterized by three principal features: autonomy, circularity, and self-referencing which together provide the ability to self-create or self-renew. Autopoiesis is defined as self-production through a closed system of relations. The aim of living systems is to produce themselves, their own organization and identity being the most important product.

Luhman (1990) describes the general theory of self-referential autopoietic systems as a scheme for the observation of systems (p. 2). Three types of systems are identified within this framework: living, psychic, and social. Social systems are comprised of three entities: societies, organizations, and interactions. Luhman (1990) affirms that within the framework of autopoietic systems, communication is the elementary unit of self-referential process. "Reflexive communication is not only an occasional event, it is a continuing possibility being co-produced by the autopoiesis itself " (p. 2).

Maturana and Varela (1980) explain that living systems strive to maintain an identity by subordinating all changes to the maintenance of their own organization as a given set of relations. They do so by engaging in circular patterns of interactions whereby change in one element of the system is coupled by changes in other elements, setting up continuous patterns of interactions that are always self-referential. According to Maturana and Varela, they are self-referential because a system cannot enter into interactions that are not specified in the pattern of relations that define its organization, or its phenomenological domain. This concept is important to this study because it informs the essential conflict and difficulty inherent in any collaboration. Each individual within the separate organizations as well as each organization is self-referential and actively engaged in self-reproduction. Collaboration asks for a new, integrated identity to take shape–a form of radical togetherness. By studying the experience of collaboration among the participants in this study, I hoped to gain insight into how the individuals evolved beyond their immediate self-referenced identity to create a new, integrated identity that included the other members of the collaboration. That new identity then becomes the self-referenced, self-produced individual or organization.

Two important concepts within this autopoietic systems framework are autonomy and closure. Maturana and Varela describe these as organizational in relation to being part of a coherent whole separate from other wholes. They state that organizations close in on themselves in order to maintain stable patterns of relations. Further, it is this process of closure or self-reference that distinguishes a system as a system. In order to discover the nature of the total system it is necessary to interact with it and trace its circular pattern of interactions. To understand the autopoietic nature of systems, it is important to

understand how autonomy and interdependence work together to maintain themselves and other systems within the total system. The environment is a part of the system's organization because it is a part of its domain of interactions. Therefore, the system and its environment cannot be separated. Relationships with the environment are internally determined through the relationships and interactions of the elements of the system. There are no independent patterns of causation. Autonomy and interdependence are one. A change in any one sub-system can transform all the other sub-systems, within the total system.

Morgan (1986) writes that "Complex systems must be understood as process. The logic of such systems rests in the network of relations that define and sustain patterns of causality"(p. 253). According to Morgan, systems can only evolve and change along with self-generated changes in identity. What initiates these changes involves random variations occurring within the total system. The problems of change–whether a system will evolve to a higher level or degenerate depends on how these random variations are dealt with. Chance interactions and connections lead to the development of new systems of relations and patterns of interactions. Jantz (1980) writes that "... the dynamic system as a whole may also be understood as one giant fluctuation. In the domain of the living, there is little that is solid or rigid. An autopoietic structure results from the interaction of many processes"(p. 44). Jantz holds that central to any discussion of self-organizing dynamics is the concept of connectedness, or patterns of interactions within and between systems. A change in one pattern leads to changes in other patterns. Within human systems, it is through the processes of relationship and communication that social system patterns change and evolve.

For the purpose of providing a conceptual framework for this study, Figure 1 illustrates the connecting links between the elements of a collaborative alliance. The boundaries are contained within a dynamic balance between the environment and the random variations occurring within the interplay of the operating systems and sub-systems. The systems are representative of the individual agencies participating in the collaboration; the sub-systems are the clusters of individuals and groups that came

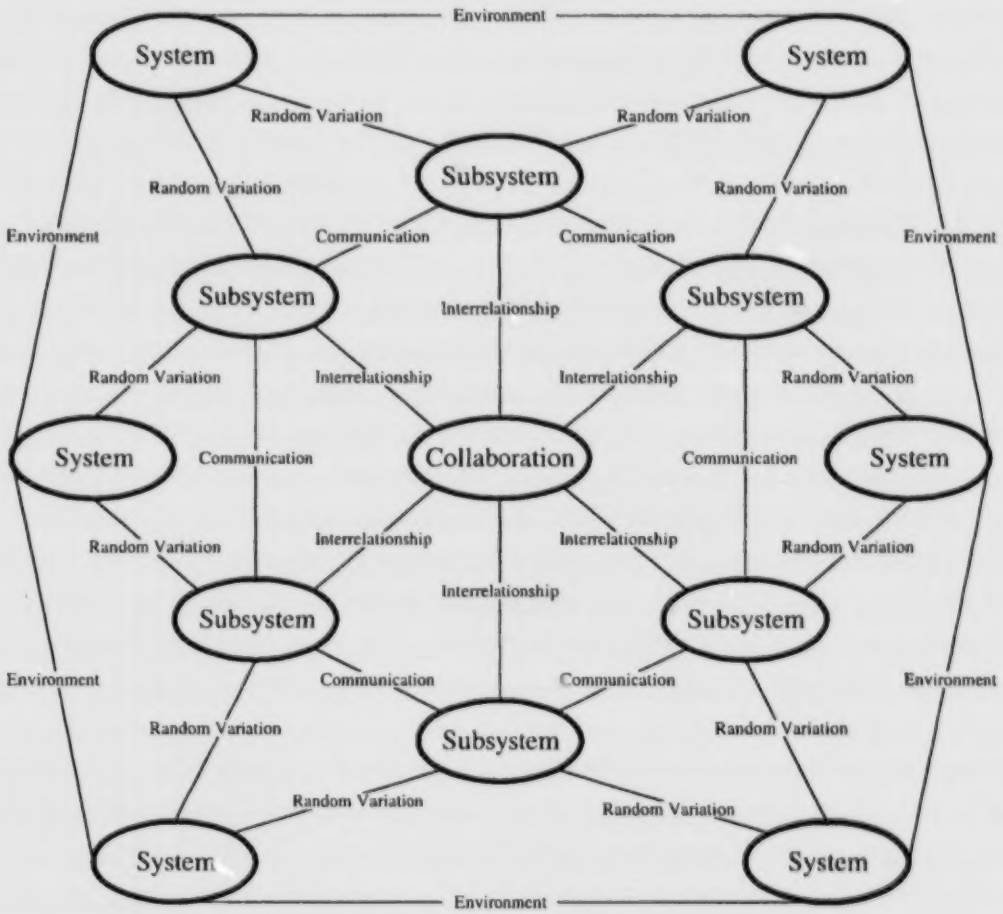

Figure 1. Diagram of theoretical framework.

together as part of the collaborative process. Interrelationship and communication provide the vehicles for the collaborative processes to emerge.

Summary

Autopoietic systems theory provides a framework for the study of collaborative processes. The dual nature of systems being autonomous and interdependent offers an opportunity for understanding the difficulties inherent within a collaboration. Through studying the patterns of relations and the nature of interactions between and among the individuals who preside within the system, it is proposed that we can better understand collaboration. Within this framework, let us return to the initial inquiries that this research addresses. What are the essential interpersonal dynamics involved in establishing and maintaining a collaborative alliance? How is the dynamic balance between autonomy and interdependence established and maintained? What is the nature of the resulting conflict and how is it managed? Through what decision making and problem solving processes is resolution achieved? And finally, how are communication and relationship defined and manifested within this network of interactions?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework in this study is autopoietic systems theory, which presents an essential dialectic tension existing between the concepts of autonomy and interdependence. In order to take this framework and relate it to the development and implementation of a collaborative alliance, certain supportive areas of study must be presented. These related areas of inquiry are: (a) organizational relations in the postmodern era, (b) collaboration, and (c) planned social change. Phenomenology as a method of research will be discussed in Chapter 3. Organizational relations, that involves the way "individuals relate to one another in order to make the group feel safe, comfortable and productive" (Schein, 1992, p. 132) represents the context for this study of the interrelationships among several different organizations. Collaboration, simply put, the act of working together to solve a mutually identified and defined problem, represents the phenomena that is being studied. Planned social change presents the focus of energies and intention to achieve a collaborative process.

Organizational Relations in the Post Modern Era

The postmodern era is characterized by complexity and turbulence (Gray, 1985; Berquist, 1993; Lipman-Blumen, 1996). Gray (1985) writes, "Virtually all organizational theories acknowledge that environmental complexity, uncertainty and turbulence are among the central problems facing organizations and that a chief task of organizations is to reduce this complexity, uncertainty and turbulence to manageable proportions" (p.55). Postmodern organizations are described by Alter & Hage (1993) as "... systemic

networks that make decisions jointly and integrate their efforts to produce a product or service, adjust more rapidly to changing technologies and market conditions, develop new product and services in a shorter time period, and provide more creative solutions in the process" (p. 2).

Bennis (1993) writes, "I see democracy, collaboration and science as three broad streams moving steadily toward a confluence in the 20th century" (p. 2). Bennis predicts that new shapes, patterns, and models will emerge within the next 25-50 years which will mark the end of bureaucracy and the rise of new social systems better able to cope with 20th century demands. He describes an environment of rapid technological change and diversification. This environment has three key features: interdependency rather than competition, turbulence rather than stability, and large rather than small enterprises. Bennis states that "Skills in human interaction will become more important due to the necessity for collaboration" (p. 15).

Since the 1960's there has been a movement away from vertical integration, with the federal government experimenting with decentralizing the control of human service delivery systems. The reason was that services were found to be fragmented, duplicative and often inaccessible due to conflicting eligibility requirements. For example, the 1980's saw a movement towards the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill. This required renewed efforts towards the development of systemic approaches to the delivery of health and human services. Alter & Hage (1993) write that "(i) t is these cooperative behaviors, the growing number of partnerships, consortia, obligational and systemic networks, that represent a stunning change in institutional forms of governance. We predict that they are the future institution-interorganizational networks" (p. 13). The authors see the

development of these institutional network systems as being "distinctive and even revolutionary institutional form that applies across a wide range of sectors and that represents a strategy of adaptation and survival" (p. 24). Organizations, in this context, are viewed as being anchored in networks of interactions with other networks, and represent a stabilizing force in the life-span of an organization. The authors define a network as the "basic social form that permits interorganizational interactions of exchange, concerted action, and joint production"(p. 13).

Jean Lipman-Blumen (1996) describes the present social environment as the "connective era" and defines this environment as:

> ... loosely structured global networks of organizations and nations tied to multiple sub-networks, living in a closely federated world. These networks link all kinds of groups with long chains of leaders and supporters, who communicate, debate, negotiate and collaborate to accomplish their objectives. (p. 2)

> In the emerging postmodern era, a new and more diverse image of society is unfolding. Whereas the modern era was characterized by accelerating change, the postmodern era is typified by a mixture of accelerated and unpredictable change. There turbulence and change ceases to be predictable, either in terms of direction or speed. Efforts to bring about change in postmodern organizations typically focus on the domains of process and attitude. (Berquist, 1993, p. 228)

In order to effectively study and understand relationships within interorganizational systems, Trist (1983) recommends that the focus of study be on interorganizational domains, not single organizations. Trist defined domains as functional social systems that occupy a position in social space between society as a whole and the single organization. Gray (1989) adds to this definition. She describes a domain as a set of actors, groups, and organizations that become joined by a common problem or interest. She further states that a domain level of focus is essential for understanding and solving

the complex problems which society faces in the postmodern era. In the areas of health and human services, complex problems abound.

> More and more, children are coming to school bearing the stresses of a seemingly ceaseless upsurge in chaos. Our society has undergone massive changes, leaving families vulnerable...threatening the well-being of all citizens but especially children...Highlighting a new conception of problems and solutions affecting education is the idea that school leaders and educational policymakers increasingly seek collaboration with representatives of welfare, health, and criminal justice in order to serve students and their families. (Rigsby, 1995, p. 23)

The key points related to organizational relations are: the nature of reality within the context of the postmodern era is complex, turbulent and unpredictable; a turbulent environment necessitates a different way of being than organizations have practiced in the past; a different way of being is spawning institutional networks as an adaptive process; and adaptive processes are particularly evident in the area of health and human services where individuals and families have multiple needs and must be treated holistically.

Collaboration

Gray (1985) describes collaborative problems as those which are "bigger than any single organization acting alone can solve" (p. 911). She cites two conditions that facilitate interorganizational collaboration: the limitations of traditional adversarial methods for resolving conflict and increasing environmental turbulence. Gray writes that "(t)urbulence occurs when large, competing organizations, acting independently in diverse directions, create unanticipated and dissonant consequences for themselves and others (p. 911). "Collaboration is initiated through appreciation of the interdependence which exists and the need for joint appreciation among stakeholders of the nature and substance of their interdependence" (p. 917). And further, "Collaboration requires that the

participants orient their processes, decisions, and actions toward issues related to the problem domain that brought them together" (Gray, 1989, p. 148).

Davies (1995) writes that "(c)omprehensiveness should be a primary policy goal, to be sought in order to address the problem of fragmentation, and that collaboration and family empowerment are key strategies to achieve comprehensiveness" (p. 267). Kohl (1991) during his tenure as a United States congressman, agreed that "(t) he social service delivery system was fractured and certainly inadequate to meet the complex needs of today's families...solutions would be found only through working together"(p. 262). He advocated for "statewide, comprehensively coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency systems to provide early intervention and family preservation services" (p. 262).

Stewart (1996) writes that "Collaboration refers to simply working together or cooperating for a common purpose (p. 20). Gray (1998) defines collaboration as occurring when "...a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain" (p. 11).

Polivka (1995) sets forth five components for a conceptual framework for collaboration: environmental context, situational factors, task characteristics, transactional factors, and outcomes. Ovretvent (1996) describes collaboration within a multidisciplinary team context as having five descriptors: the degree of integration, the extent of collective responsibility, the membership or group boundaries, client pathways and decision making processes, and management structures. Roberts (1991) identifies four core elements of a collaboration: having a transmutational purpose; explicit and voluntary membership; joint decision making; and an interactive process with sustained,

reflexive interaction among participants. "Collaboration refers to the process; collaborative alliances are the forms" (Gray, 1985, p. 10).

Each of these characterizations of collaboration includes as a key element the aspect of an interactive process, involving interpersonal dynamics, relationship, and communication. Collaborative problems are messy. Individuals and organizations bring to the process their own histories, biases, and need agendas. Linda Olds (1989) writes that collaboration involves the search for a broader view of human beings that does justice to our inextricable interrelatedness with each other, and with the environment and with the wider reality. This study focuses on the interpersonal dimension of collaboration. One assumption that I make is that the complex nature of multidisciplinary collaboration requires a high degree of interconnectiveness and balancing of autonomy and interdependence. This balancing of autonomy and interdependence is a core issue and provides an understanding towards many of the difficulties encountered during the collaborative process. A dialectical tension is created between autonomy and interdependence. Within this multidisciplinary setting, each organization is concerned with maintaining its professional and personal boundaries, and with reproducing itself and its practices. Each organization has its own unique culture, patterns of interactions, and ways of doing and being. Even mundane events such as holidays and celebrations are different for each organization. Yet, within the health and human service context, the literature suggests there is a common language of caring and helping. I am assuming that the commonality of language and intention is providing the basis for the collaborative relationship among the organizations being investigated.

In summary, the key points related to collaboration within this framework of health and human services are: the problems are big and messy, multifaceted and have systemic repercussions among the clients and agencies; organizations and individuals experience a dialectical tension between autonomy and interdependence requiring a high degree of collaboration; a focus of the collaboration is the mutually defined problem domain; and to achieve understanding of the problem, reflexive communication is necessary.

Planned Social Change

In order to achieve collaborative relationships, individuals and organizations are required to change the way they perceive and respond to the situation. To move from autonomy to interdependence, and from bureaucracy to collaborative alliance, requires a process of planned social change.

Social change is defined by Zaltman and Duncan (1977) as an alteration in the way an individual or group of individuals behaves as a result of a change in their definition of the situation. Within this context, change is defined as the relearning on the part of an individual or group in response to newly perceived requirements of a given situation requiring action and which results in a change in the structure and/or functioning of social systems. Change requires that members of a social system relearn how they perform their roles, create entirely new relationships, and alter communication patterns in a group.

The process of change often involves resistance to change. Watson (1973) defines resistance as "...any conduct that serves to maintain the status quo in the face of pressure

to change the status quo. All forces that contribute to stability in personality or social systems can be perceived as resisting change. These are tendencies to achieve, preserve and return to equilibrium" (p. 63).

Lippett (1958) addresses the problem of resistance to change in groups. He writes that "Readiness for change on one part of a system may be negated by the unwillingness or inability of other interdependent parts to change" (p. 77). Lippett further states that one of the major barriers to change in groups is the "...members' imperfect awareness of their own interpersonal processes and their lack of a frame of reference in which to judge their performances and their possibilities for improvement" (p. 181).

Zaltman (1973) identifies threats to power and influence as organizational barriers to change. He writes that, "(o) ne of the most difficult problems to overcome when two or more organizations merge is the feeling on the part of the individual organizations that they are going to lose control over decision-making" (p. 75). Schein (1970, in Zaltman, D, 1977) states that the "fundamental problem in intergroup competition is the conflict of goals and the breakdown of interaction and communication between groups" (p. 99).

Key points for my study related to the area of planned social change are: that change is a process of relearning and involves both perception and action; the change process ignites a counter process presenting as resistance to the change; the force of resistance is both inevitable and necessary to maintain the dialectical tension and balance within the system; the challenge for the system is to maintain stability while moving forward with the change process; and stability and balance are reached through the collaborative process involving communication and relationship.

Summary

The literature review provided a critical summary of research on the topics of organizational relations, collaboration, and planned social change. Analysis of the literature provides insight into the problems of the nature of change, the necessity for change within the current organizational environment that is turbulent and complex, and the need for collaborative processes to effect a successful change. In order to study this change process from selected individuals' experiential perspective, a qualitative, phenomenological design is appropriate. The literature points out that a change process sets up a counter resistance process. The theoretical framework describes this change/resistance as being in dialectical balance and is caused by the interplay between the forces of autonomy and interdependence. This study is about how these forces play themselves out in the everyday lives of individuals experiencing a major change phenomenon–the development of a one-stop center.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this section, I will discuss briefly the reason for selecting phenomenology as a research methodology as well as the rationale for using in-depth interviewing as the method of data collection. I will also describe the participants who were interviewed, the interview process, and the development and use of profiles as a way of revealing the data. Analysis and interpretation of the data occurred during the process of profile building. A discussion of procedures that were used to insure soundness in the data will conclude this section. But first, I will locate myself and the contexts that informed this study.

Locating Myself

> Poststructuralists and postmodernists have contributed to the understanding that there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual. Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity. There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of the observer and the observed. (Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. 1998, p. 1)

The world in which I was situated when I first envisioned this research project was nursing. I had been a nurse for 15 years and during that time I had many opportunities to observe and experience the good, bad, and the ugly aspects of interprofessional collaboration. The practice of nursing requires daily interaction with a multitude of professionals, often several disciplines, each providing care from a particular perspective. The patient ceases to be a whole being and becomes instead a fragmented being with competing and often contradictory practitioners vying for dominance. Nursing has historically advocated for holistic, interprofessional practice. So, it was a natural

transition for me to extend my holistic perspective from nursing to include education and social services in the study of interprofessional collaboration.

I have found it fascinating to observe how difficult interprofessional collaboration is from an interpersonal perspective. Putting the administrative structures in place to facilitate collaboration is relatively easy. Finding a way for the individuals involved to set aside their egos and their personal agendas, and work together is hard. I wanted to see how this group of professionals involved in the collaboration set about to do this, to find out what motivated them to embark on this venture, what the outcomes were, and how they felt about the whole process.

At the time I began this project, I was working as Division Director for Health and Human Services at the local community college. It was through this role that I first became aware of the development of the Newmark Center. It was apparent that not only was this an endeavor of great energy and vision, but also that it represented an excellent example of interprofessional collaboration within the field of health and human services. By the time I had become involved as a researcher, the structure of the group and its meeting schedule was in place. That aspect was working and seemed fairly straightforward.

What interested me more was the interpersonal relationship aspect of this collaboration. I knew many of the participants from my work at the college, and knew of the others, this being a small community. I knew these were strong leaders within their respective organizations. How was it going to be when these individuals came together to create an entirely new and different sort of health and human service organization? What interpersonal processes and dynamics would be required to make this work? And how

would this experience affect the lives, both professional and personal, of the individuals involved? I realized that I had an opportunity to study this process which presented itself as an organizational petri-dish of sorts.

My interest was in describing and understanding the actual lived experience of the individuals who participated in this collaboration. Therefore, phenomenology was selected as the methodology best suited for this purpose. Since beginning this work, I have become a passionate student of phenomenology. In addition to my reading in preparation for this report, I have attended two sessions of the International Institute of Qualitative Health Research Methodology at the University of Alberta. I will continue to study, learn, and practice phenomenology.

Phenomenology

The phenomenological approach was chosen in order to attempt to understand the meaning of events and interpretations of those events for ordinary people in particular situations (Bogden & Biklen, 1992). Phenomenology emphasizes the subjective aspects of people's behaviors rather than focusing on objective facts. One assumption is that it is through the individuals' conceptual world-view that meaning is derived, and that it is this meaning of experience that constructs reality for an individual.

Polit and Hungler (1987) define phenomenology:

> An approach to human inquiry that emphasizes the complexity of human experience and the need to study that experience as it is actually lived. The phenomenological approach is based on different assumptions about the nature of humans and how that nature is to be understood. Phenomenology focuses on the complexity of human nature, the ability of humans to shape and create their own experiences, and the idea that truth or reality is a social construct. Phenomenological research emphasizes understanding the

> human experience as it is actually experienced, generally through the collection and analysis of narrative, subjective material. (p. 21)

The goal of the phenomenological method is an accurate description of the experience or phenomenon that is being studied (Omery, 1983, p. 61). The in-depth phenomenological interview is the instrument of investigation of the experience of another person. In this particular study, it is the experience of a group of multidisciplinary, human service professionals coming together to form a collaborative alliance for the purpose of providing integrated services to children and families. Each professional discipline and organization brings to the alliance a different set of roles and relationships, cultural experiences, and independent agendas. The goal of this research is to gain understanding of the experience of collaboration for these individuals.

Phenomenological Interview

Because the research approach is based on the interpretation of personal meanings, personal interview was seen as the most appropriate form of data collection. The phenomenological interview is an inductive, descriptive research method that seeks to describe phenomena in their fullest depth and breadth. The phenomenological interview, according to Seidman (1991), is a focused, in-depth exploration into the lived experience of the participant. Through the interview process, the intellectual and emotional connections between the participants' lives, their work, and the collaboration will be explored and placed within a meaningful context. Seidman (1991) writes "(t) he primary way a researcher can investigate an educational organization, institution, or process is through the experience of the individual people who make up the organization or carry out the process" (p. 4). Through the interview process, not only are the facts of

the experience discovered, but also the meaning the people involved make of their experience. This information will be important for future collaborations and as a contribution towards the advancement of a theoretical understanding of collaboration.

The phenomenological interview is an active, collaborative process between the interviewer and narrator. Together they construct the story and its meaning. The active interview has two key aims: to gather information about what the research project is about and to explicate how knowledge concerning that topic is narratively constructed (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) write that "Narrative complexity requires an interview format that accommodates contextual shifts and reflexivity" (p. 55). Thus, the interviews were somewhat structured, yet left room for broad areas of inquiry.

The interview structure consists of three interviews, each lasting about ninety minutes with a passage of time of about a week between each interview. The passage of time allows for consistency through the validation of the participants' narrative. A copy of the interview was given to the participant, accompanied by any comments or questions that arose from the data. These were gone over at the second and third interviews.

The interviews followed a pattern of focused life history, a description of the details of the experience of collaboration, and finally, reflection on the meaning of the experience of collaboration. Using reflexive dialogic technique, I discussed and verified data from the interviews, and asked for clarification at appropriate times. I conscientiously avoided leading or suggestive questions or comments. I kept observational notes and referred back to them periodically for clarification and summation. The interviews were audiotaped by me to protect the identity of the

participant. From the data collected in the interviews, profiles were crafted which tell the story of the individuals' experiences in their own words.

Profile

A profile is a story, crafted from the raw data of interviews, which has been organized into themes and patterns from which meaning is made. "Precisely because they are meaning-making structures, narratives must be preserved, not fractured, by investigators, who must respect respondents' ways of constructing meaning and analyze how it is accomplished"(Reissman, 1993, p. 4). Seidman (1991) writes that "(o) ne key to the power of the profile is that it is presented in the words of the participant" (p. 92). A discussion on how validity and reliability are addressed in the profiling process will occur in the section on data analysis.

Selection of Participants

The participants were selected from the key stakeholders involved in the Newmark One-Stop Center on the campus of Southwestern Oregon Community College in Coos Bay, Oregon. A purposive sample based on the researcher's knowledge of the possible full group was chosen. It is acknowledged that such subjective sampling cannot guarantee the typicalness of the subjects. This was not a goal. I initially selected five individuals to be interviewed based on their representing the diversity present in the collaborative alliance. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) recommend a wide enough sample so that diversity of types is explored. The sample size was small but is considered appropriate for the methodology. It must be acknowledged that the results of this study are derived from a small group of individuals in a particular context. There is no

suggestion that the results can be expanded to the general population. However, the insights gained from this study may be of interest and use to others involved in collaborative processes.

Agency partners of the Newmark One-Stop Center who were selected as participants are: Community Action Program, South Coast Business Employment Corporation, Southwestern Oregon Community College, Adult and Family Services, and AMBIT (drug and alcohol treatment program). The key individuals who participated in the development and implementation of the One-Stop Center were interviewed. Additional agencies involved in the development of the Newmark Center but not included in this study were the Workforce Quality Council, the Volunteer Program, Consumer Credit, and the Employment Department. These particular agencies had a more peripheral role in the development of the One-Stop Center. They did not have leaders sitting at the table on a regular basis and so were not part of the overall, day-to-day problem solving and decision-making processes. The individuals interviewed were all white and middle-class. I am Hispanic and middle-class. I acknowledge that the results of this study might have been different given a greater degree of diversity.

The One-Stop Center is a relatively new endeavor of its kind, being an integrated service provider for health and human services. From a research perspective, the One-Stop Center setting was conducive to a study of collaboration because it is rich with complex and messy problems. Also because the agencies present here are representative of the problem areas which are impacting society, especially families, such as poverty, addiction, and homelessness. The Newmark Center is designed as an integrative assessment and service provider that requires a high degree of collaboration between

individuals and agencies. The Newmark Center is a recent alliance, having opened its doors in December of 1997. The Center is a partnership of local, county, and state governmental agencies, and includes non-profit organizations.

Adult and Family Services (AFS) is the largest of the social service agencies, both in terms of number of clients served and funding resources. AFS is state and federally funded. The agency provides financial assistance to individuals and families who are in poverty situations. Community Action Program (CAP) is a non-profit organization receiving most of its funding through grants. CAP provides emergency food, financial assistance, and shelter to individuals and families who fall through the cracks at AFS. AMBIT, a local drug and alcohol treatment facility at the time of the development of the Newmark Center, was established under the umbrella of CAP. AMBIT received both state and federal funds to treat individuals with addiction problems. At the time of this writing, AMBIT no longer exists. South Coast Business Employment Center (SCBEC) is a local agency also primarily funded through grants. SCBEC works closely with AFS t provide training and support for welfare-to-work programs. And finally, Southwestern Oregon Community College (SWOCC) is the education partner. SWOCC is also the landlord because the One-Stop Center was built on its campus. SWOCC receives rent from the other agencies. Like most community colleges, its funding comes from student enrollment, state and federal allocations, grants, and private donations.

Data Analysis

Data analysis occurred through the creation of profiles of the participants in the study. Seidman (1991) writes "(t) he processes of gathering data through interviewing and

analysis of the data are inseparable." Issues of validity and reliability are addressed within the context of qualitative research methodology. Reliability is defined as the degree to which the finding is independent of any accidental circumstances of the research and validity is the degree to which the finding is interpreted correctly.

There are several methods one may use to encourage reliability and validity. Wolcott (1994) lists nine. They are:

1. Talk little, listen a lot.
2. Record accurately.
3. Begin writing early.
4. Let readers see for themselves.
5. Report fully.
6. Be candid.
7. Seek feedback.
8. Try to achieve balance or rigorous subjectivity.
9. Write accurately.

Wolcott (1994) equates validity with understanding. He writes, "Through research we are seeking to understand a social world we are in the process of constructing" (p. 348). His is that if we cannot ever be certain of getting it all right, at least we can be sure of not getting it all wrong.

Trustworthiness and authenticity, or validity, is achieved through the establishment of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility is obtained through activities of member checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation of data sources. Transferability is obtained through the

diversity of the sample and the patterns inherent within the profiles. Dependability and confirmability are obtained through observational notes and methodological notes. Subjectivity is a strength of qualitative research. It is important for the researchers to reveal their own feelings and personal reactions. However, one must differentiate between revealing feelings and imposing judgments. "The task at hand is to create an interpretation of the setting or some feature of it to allow people who have not directly observed the phenomena to have a deeper understanding of them" (Feldman, 1995, p.1).

Protection of Participants

Written informed consent was obtained prior to interviewing in order to protect the participants from breaches of confidentiality. The study was described and assurance was given that their identity would be protected. I audiotaped and transcribed the interviews. Names and even initials were left off the written profiles.

Summary

To summarize, phenomenology was selected as a research method in order to attempt to grasp the nature of the experience of collaboration among a selected group of educators and social service professionals involved in the development of a One-Stop Center. The literature suggests that the collaborative process involves a significant change in how individuals and organizations relate to one another and how they go about their business. The process of change sets up a counter process of resistance to change. Resistance to change is caused by the dialectic between autonomy and interdependence. As individuals and organizations evolve from functioning autonomously to working together interdependently, certain behaviors and assumptions alter the professional,

social, and cultural environment. This study seeks to understand how this interplay between change and resistance to change and between autonomy and interdependence works itself out in a collaborative project such as the Newmark One-Stop Center.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the profiles of the participants in this study and to discuss the themes that are derived from the profiles. The profiles were crafted from the in-depth interview data. (Seidman 1991) writes, "a profile in the words of the participant is the research product that I think is most consistent with the process of interviewing. We interview to come to know the experience of the participants through their stories" (p. 91).

Frank (2000) states that "people do not tell narratives, they tell stories. People tell stories to reaffirm, possibly to create, and possibly to redirect the relationship within which the story is told" (p. 354). (Seidman 1991) confirms that "we learn from hearing and studying what the participants say. Although the interviewer can never be absent from the process, by crafting a profile in the participant's own words the interviewer allows those words to reflect the person's consciousness" (p. 91).

The purpose of this study was to understand what the experience of collaboration meant to a group of individuals who participated in a collaborative project. What were the interpersonal dynamics that facilitated or inhibited the collaborative process? How did relationship and communication affect the process? What is the nature of conflict and how is conflict managed? What decision-making and problem-solving processes are critical to the success of a collaboration? And also, did this group of individuals learn something that can be passed along to others attempting a similar project?

"In the social sciences there is only interpretation. Nothing speaks for itself. Moving from the field to the text to the reader is a complex, reflective process"(Denzin,

1999, p. 313-334). My standpoint involves writing from a particular position and a specific time.

The specific time and place for this study is a rural town on the Oregon coast during the late 1990's. The participants at the time of the project were community leaders, and heads of social service agencies that were serving a common client base. At the same time, there were events happening at the state and federal levels that impacted local agencies and their funding for human service contracts. As you will see as you read the profiles, timing and opportunity were important to the birth and success of this project. Beyond that, it was the individual and collective characteristics of this group of individuals that created the Newmark Center. These individuals welcomed me into their lives for the length of the research process. I have my own personal experience with interprofessional collaboration and therefore could respond to their experience of collaboration from my own understanding. This shared understanding allowed for a relationship to develop during the interview process. Together we sought meaning and understanding of the experience as well as a way to express the understanding. I feel that the process and the resulting profiles effectively explored the subjective experience and the meaning of that experience for this group of individuals.

The themes were identified and grouped following the principles of qualitative inquiry articulated by Morse (2000) at the International Institute of Qualitative Inquiry Conference, Edmunton, Alberta. According to Morse, inquiry is active, not passive. The researcher must look rather than rely on seeing. Nothing emerges from the data; work must be done to uncover the themes and patterns in the inquiry. The researcher asks analytic questions in order to understand what lies beneath the surface of the text. Morse

encourages the researcher to approach reality as a complex, confusing, interconnected, and interrelated phenomenon. She advises to keep ones' own agenda at home, and to listen for replication, using inductive techniques in order to verify. Qualitative inquiry, according to Morse, is a process of making the everyday extraordinary.

Presentation of Participant Profiles

The first step in the process of thematic analysis I used involved the creation of the profiles. This process involved reading the interview transcripts through multiple times, bracketing passages that were recognized as important and of interest. My sense of what was important came from my knowledge of the subject under study, my notes to myself during the interview process and during transcription, and from my intuition. Once the profiles were crafted, I then read through them multiple times, noting reflections or other remarks in the margins. I was looking for replication of thoughts, actions, and meanings that constituted a pattern among the profiles. I did have a few a priori structures in mind as I began my analysis that followed from the theoretical framework. The two most prominent were relationship and communication. I was particularly interested in seeing how these concepts were brought out in the data. I was also looking for the interplay between autonomy and interdependence, and the resulting dialectical tension between these dynamics. I did however, as Morse suggested, try to leave my personal agenda at home and although I had these concepts in mind, I hope I did not allow them to adversely affect my analysis. As you read the profiles, note that the entire profile is a quote so there are no quotation marks marking the narrative. It is only where the narrator is speaking in the first person regarding something he or she said or when the speaker is

quoting another person that quotation marks are used, thereby separating that passage from the overall narrative.

Participant #1 Profile

I was born in the late 1930's, and an only child, I really had a lot of privilege, I had a lot of nurturing. I emerged as a person who felt like I could do anything. So I challenged people I had no right to challenge. They tolerated me, but I was over the line.

I never really saw poverty up close as a child. I went to a private women's college in Pennsylvania and I got a degree in education which is where I thought I wanted to spend my career. I did teach kindergarten, first, second, third and fifth grade and I did teach Headstart and that was really the first time that I saw poverty up close. I was around 31. One of my very first home visits, I knocked on the door and the door opened about two inches and this woman whose face was just bloodied stuck her face out the crack of the door and, the only thing in my experience that I could possibly think of was that she had been in a car accident. I mean, I couldn't conceive that there would be any other way that you could look like that. She obviously was very fearful and she wouldn't let me in and I was so totally naïve, I mean I just stepped away thinking "well, someone's taking care of her". And then, as the year went on and I made more and more home visits I began to see, I began to understand what I was looking at. It was very exciting to me to think I could make a difference. These were good years. It was 1971 and Headstart was so young and of course everything's vulnerable–children and programs just starting up.

I knew what the heart of Headstart was. I'd worked the frontlines, I'd worked in public school. I had a little bit of ah, there was this invincible feeling that I had, that I was

different, that I was special, that I could do whatever I wanted and if I failed, I would be fine. People would help me along the way. Generally, I believed, at that time, and still believe, that I am my brothers' keeper, but they are mine as well. You know, no matter what went wrong, people were there who would help see me through.

I had been on the East Coast now six years. I wanted to be back on the West Coast. I'd worked in Headstart for eight years by then and had a lot of contacts in the Pacific Northwest, and particularly in Oregon. One day the board chair of community action called and said, "we want to know if you'd be the interim director of community action"? I did agree to do that. The plan was that I would do that for three months and they would do a national search. So they did and they decided to hire me. I remember saying, I don't have a vision for the agency. So, I did that and I did spend time thinking about the larger picture.

So, one day, I'm at Community Action, and I see this mom walking with a child who is probably four or five years old, and I knew that mom from Headstart so, and it's typical weather, it's sort of raining lightly, and I'm thinking, Ah, I wonder where she's come from, because she's coming from Coos Bay and we're in North Bend and of course she came to Community Action, she needed food. Where she'd come from was the welfare office in Coos Bay. She walked five fucking miles in the rain with that 5-year-old kid and I think for the first time, this is ridiculous! These agencies are not working together and look what happens. I can still see her face. I really began to think it's necessary to put these agencies that serve low-income folks somewhere closer together.

I feel so strongly that poverty agencies need to work together. We talked about that. I really believed that poverty programs needed to be under one roof. We talked about

how to get into closer proximity. The goal was to keep those agencies under one roof so families coming in for services would find them in one spot. You had to have a partnership. My view was always that it would be on the college campus because education is power. People could walk around and see that it wasn't scary. There was Headstart day care there. We talked about the need for the college to be a partner because so many of the people that his agency and my agency worked with and served had a difficult history with education. The education piece, which I think outside of trauma, in low-income people's lives, education is a key element. Fear of education, lack of success, in just a feeling of self-esteem. Because the culture that we live in, our culture values educated people and devalues people who have no education.

About two and a half years before it [Newmark Center] started to get built we began to sit at the table. I was the one who said, "We can do this." There were times when people said not only can we not do this, I don't even want to do this. And I think that one sells a vision behind the scenes. I would say, one doesn't sit down and say, "Today we're going to vision," without any seeds planted. It's a small community. We see people daily in meetings. We see people socially, we see people in a support setting. So when we said, "let's get to the table and talk about this," most people understood what we were talking about. So, when we finally did get together, we had talked about it, we began to map it out. There was a lot of work going on behind the scenes so that the people at the table already had a vision.

One of the things we were seeing nationally through the Federal Register, is they were talking partnerships and then, there started to be training conferences on a regional level and on a national level on bringing many players to the table. Because the people

didn't have a single issue: it wasn't an educational issue, or an income issue, a health issue. The issues were multiple and I think people began to feel that a multiple approach with people working together was going to be the answer. You could see the time was right. So often you have a vision and there is no nest or cradle for it, it dies. When we finally had the sort of support with AFS at the state level, then we started to move. You could see the writing on the wall as far as the world getting ready for us.

Some of the issues we had were very mechanical or practical and some of them were philosophical, more nebulous. Negotiating a way for the players to afford to come into the building was a real challenge. It's one thing to say that we'll all work together. It's another thing to start to do the practical everyday pieces of that. The design of the building was another challenge. Philosophically, an educational system looks at buildings differently than a crisis service. There's confidentiality issues. We were going to have AMBIT in there, which is the drug and alcohol treatment program. How do you deal with confidentiality? At the other end was Small Business Development Center (SBDC) saying, "Our players are not even going to come into this building where welfare people are working. They're not going to walk in the same door."

We could see that bringing the staffs together to know each other and appreciate each other's work was going to be a task. Everywhere there's a pecking order or class system. That comes, you know, from thinking my work is more valuable than yours, and ah, you wouldn't even have these people if it wasn't for me. But, the more people work together and the more people talk to each other and love together, the more I think, they can appreciate that each person is making a valuable contribution and the result is good, bigger than its parts.

At the leadership level, we worked hard to give everyone equal voice. There's a certain element of trust. I have some leadership skills. I have some charisma, whatever you want to call it, where I say with passion, "We can do this," and people believe me, trust in me. And if we can't it's like my fault you know and that's all right with me. I truly believe we can do anything we decide to do. It's just a matter of staying open, of sharing, of not seeing yourself as the only person who has control, needs control, it's constantly an exercise in giving up, giving up everything. It was always a matter of balance.

We felt like that if we didn't have input from all the staffs coming along we were going to get in there and find big problems we had just sailed past. And we also felt that there were so many different perspectives that in the design of the building and in the broader vision, if they weren't included, we'd have to go back and try to figure out how to stuff them in after things were already done. It was the thing to do to trust your frontline people. That they had a different job than administration, that they knew. If administrators designed the front door and the intake process, it would look really different than if the worker designed it.

I don't think there was a single meeting where someone wasn't uptight about something, you know, whether it was players, you know, whatever it was, we just talked about it. We just pretty much plowed through it. By then we had great respect for each other. I think we met every other week. We had a commitment, the leadership team, the partnership team to, that everything else would come second to those meetings. People gave up everything. It was like the sacred time. The fact that you show up at the meeting requires respect. We knew that you had pressed the rest of your life in order to sit at the

sacred time. You know, people were people to begin with. They worked in social services or education or emergency services, or health, or mental health, or whatever. They worked with and for the good of the people.

And, we met outside the meeting. If it looked like somebody was, left that meeting feeling like their agenda was not fairly addressed, then a person would get together with them, or give them a call. If anybody missed a meeting we always called and said, Are you OK? I'll catch you up. RW was just compulsive about taking adequate minutes and they were mailed out on time to the people who didn't make it and so then could be kept informed. We talked about it, who was going to maintain a record, if somebody wasn't there then somebody else kept the record. It carried on.

So, funders want to duplicate a success. I don't think you ever can. Success has to do with a time and a place and players. That it was time to be born, like a child, and I don't think you can birth that same child again.

It was a door open, not for one person but for a whole community and we just all walked through it, recognizing that, you have to pass through developmental stages in order to lead on to something new. Something visionary takes some stability. We pulled off a broader vision for the state of Oregon.

Participant #2 Profile

When I graduated from high school, I knew I was going to major in history. So I trundled off as a nice white middle class Klamath Falls graduate to the depths of Tacoma, Washington at Pacific Lutheran University to become a history major. And approximately 10 months into my first year of college somebody said, "What are you going to do with a

history major?" I said, "I don't know, become the curator of the Smithsonian Institute." "Well," they said, "that's a nice goal and probably when you're seventy if you're one of the top 1.1% historians in the US, you will reach that goal but in the meantime, here are your options." I said, "Yew, icky pew. I will kill junior high and high school kids if I have to see them eight hours a day for the next forty years. It is time for a new major." So that summer I decided to major in psychology. So, about six months into my psych major, I thought to look ahead on what the required classes were and figured I'd be pumping gas for the rest of my life because I could never get past learning theory or neuropsych. So, I decided, it's time for a new major. I was taking a horrendous load of classes and I needed a bonehead class to balance it out and I saw Social Work 101. I thought, "this will be a nice bonehead class." After about six weeks, about halfway through the class, I had a flash of insight that, "whoa, this field is speaking to me," despite the fact that I came from an extremely conservative republican family. I liked this, I liked the philosophy, I liked the feel.

How I always say this stuff [One-Stop Center] started is back with the JOBS program. Prior to about nine years ago, Adult and Family Services (AFS) was basically a go out and work and take whatever job you get and accept it and carry on with life. Then, with the JOBS program and Oregon doing welfare reform, seven years before the federal government figured it out, that's when it really expanded into a training and employment program, preparation and getting jobs and really developing that program so that folks would get permanent jobs and stick with them and what not. And, really developing the partnerships that, you know, pulling in the experts in training, and the experts in education, and all of these other things.

So, we started rolling with that and we'd been into the JOBS program a couple of years when I had AFS line staff coming to me and saying, "You've go to do something about community action, they're stealing our clients." So, before I could figure that out, I had another group of staff come to me saying, "You've got to do something about the college, they're stealing our clients." So we got together to figure out what was going on and we found out that, those, well actually those three and then South Coast Business, um, the four of us had the same clients. We were providing a lot of the same services, same curriculum, the whole bit, and yeah, we were competing. We were stealing each other's clients and you know, the performance that relates to it and all that. So we decided this is really ridiculous. We need to put our efforts together and work together, rather than having four or five different programs. We tried various things-let's set up a classroom over here to do a life skills class that everybody contributes to. That sort of worked but not really. And so we set up protocols on whoever gets them first can keep them and you know, all sorts of goofy things like that.

Then the AFS lease on our building expired and ah, we were in a bad building: basement, back corner, dark, dank, locks on the doors, etc. Everybody thought, "we'll never get out of this building, we have to stay in this building forever." And so, when our lease expired, we started thinking, "here's the opportunity." I got basic approval from Salem, that yes, they would be willing to look at a new facility and whatnot. So, I sent out a letter that basically said, AFS needs a lot of square footage, has an expired lease, we need a new place to live. We've talked about bringing our programs together, co-housing, and whatnot, now's our chance. Call me, write me, e-mail me. I sent that letter out to God

and everybody. There'd been a core group that had been getting together for years talking about this and basically said, do you want to join in with us and see where it could go?

Our focus from the beginning was really on the employment and training stuff, and how we've traditionally defined that is pretty broad. We've gotta have all the barrier removal stuff, you know, drug and alcohol, mental health, debt counseling and all those things that keep people from stabilizing in their employment. So, it's always been a little broader than usual, but, part of it was opportunity, who was available.

Like I said, back in the beginning, it was a vision of "Gee, this isn't working well, there must be a better way." So, we got started about all this collaboration and integration stuff and we really didn't have a clue what we were talking about. It was the group, the gang, AFS, Community Action, Consumer Credit Counseling, South Coast Business, Employment, AMBIT, and now the college, were the 12 people that were the original team. Up until the new building became a possibility we met every month or couple of months or three months, whenever we could. Then, once we realized a new building was a possibility, we started meeting every Wednesday morning from 7:30 am to noon. And right there is one of the keys to the whole partnership thing. Ah, that we saw each other similar to what we see our spouses like, people would come dragging in with curlers still in their hair, or would have forgotten to shower, or were still getting dressed, didn't have their coffee, yet, we did that basically for two years. So, we started off talking collaboration and integration and didn't really know what we were talking about. We were talking about a fairly nice, easy going cohabitation, but you know, we hadn't gotten married yet.

In the beginning we set up ground rules. You know, we called ourselves the partnership team, and we set up ground rules on how we were going to behave and the first one, or among the first, was a "no walk out" rule. You know, no matter how heated things would get, nobody would stomp out of the room.

There were times when we said, "whoa, we need a time out and we all need to stomp out of the room for a while, come back in 15 or 20 minutes and we can try this again." But it was a real fascinating dynamic to watch because we would have a complete and utter meltdown of the partnership, you know, people leaving the meeting, not talking to each other and going separate ways and being steamed but, within about a day, there would be-there's this movie where there's this guy and he's made out of mercury and he keeps getting blown up and the little pieces start coming back together-that's what our partnership team was like. Every now and then it would blow up but then a couple of people would come together over here, and kind of debrief, you know what went on, how did I do in that, how did you do in that, and a couple of more over here and then these two would come back together and within four or five days, we were back as a group, you know, carrying forward again. So, there was a fascinating dynamic and fortunately, we all took turns when we were mad of taking that initiative. And, there'd be times that I would call and say, "I think that I screwed up at the meeting yesterday, what's your view of what went on?" There's other times I'd sit and go, "I'm not going to call first, I always call first," then lo and behold, somebody would call me and say, "you know, what happened yesterday," and we'd work it through. Yeah, we'd come back together as a body again.

Well, actually, this kind of stuff is fun. This is what I like to do. There's times I would like to rip somebody's heart out. I know there's been plenty of times the partners

would love to see me disappear off the face of the earth. But, I think one of the reasons we've been able to come as far as we have is because in the rural areas, in the smaller areas, you have to know each other. I mean, this group of 10 or 12 that started off meeting, we were each on about 15 other committees together. So, we knew each other fairly well. We all knew and could accept each other's personality stuff. We'd learn ways to adapt to the different personalities and what not and just kind of generally get along. So, that's what really pulled us through the times when we wanted to kill each other.

Early on we tried to set as one of our principles that we would respect each other's organizations and their drop dead performance measures. Fortunately, we didn't all get flaming mad at the same time. There was always somebody that could say, "whoa gang, lets take a time out, walk around the lake. While you're walking, think about how this concept dovetails with other concepts." We also made a dying pact with ourselves that we would not get sucked into Salem politics. We're going to continue respecting and understanding each other's performance and anything as a system or facility will add value to that. They [performance measures] will be the umbrella that all these others fit under in this continuum. So, as long as we had at least one person in the room that was coherent enough to remind of us that, we did fairly good.

What actually came up was organizational tradition, organizational culture. Where we had some problems was in our view of line staff. Some of us viewed line staff as, here is the concept, here are the parameters, go do something and let us know what you're going to do. Other organizations were much more narrow in their view of staff so we tried to set up these interdisciplinary planning teams and it caused a fair amount of conflict. We still deal with it and it's part of, diversity is one of the big buzz-words today. It's not

just race, gender, and ethnic background but it's organization also. You've got to learn to live with and accept the cultural differences between organizations. My little name-tag says Newmark Center, it doesn't say Adult and Family Services. It took us a long time to figure out that so much of this controversy is organizational language. One of the things we tried to do was start over again, and it's really hard developing a new language.

There's always order in everything. Chaordic. A common bond here is that we're all here to help people. I think it is the clientele. Seeing the potential. It seems like most of the people, the administrative type people, are very intrinsically motivated. Ah, you know, we hate to hear, "oh, you provided leadership." None of us really feel very comfortable with that kind of a designation or recognition. I think it's a pretty shared set of values. What does the family need and what resources do we need to really make sure they get it? We're not there. There's so much more we can do. Trying to develop this into a system. "I don't care what organization I'm talking to, I'm homeless, I can't feed my kids, and I'm sick, what are you going to do for me?" There is a fair amount of common vibes or something.

It's mostly relationships, trust and respect. I think that you can get a group of people from the most diverse organizations known to mankind, personkind, as long as there was a relationship that was allowed to develop, you had a basic trust and faith in each other, and a respect for each other and their organization, you can do anything.

Something that always amazes me and boggles my mind is how people get so shook up when miscommunication happens. If we could go back to faith and trust, that when I say something that offends you, I'm not offending you I'm just ignorant. Communication and the sharing of information and the acceptance that we are going to

make decisions together and if it appears that one or two organizations went into a corner and made a decision without me what am I going to assume? Am I going to assume that they don't like me? Or am I going to assume that something screwed up and I need to find out what screwed up and how can I avoid it next time so the screw up isn't so bad? Keeping the information going and assuming we're all doing the best we can, with the resources we currently have.

The whole confidentiality, how are we going to share information and share cases, they were not simple topics, that caused the major flameouts. They were heavy duty stuff that we still haven't completely resolved. Confidentiality, ah, my client is better than your client; that was kind of the worthy vs. the unworthy poor. And we'd got three or four partners that were extremely concerned about the openness of the facility, and there the concern was along the lines of, if we're open like this, my doctor, lawyer, county commissioner, Weyerhaeuser executive, will not come in for their drug treatment, if they have to come into the same door as those other people. So, there was, that caused some real meltdowns, to get into the whole worthy poor vs. the unworthy poor and are we dealing with human beings or are we dealing with classes and this that and the other thing.

One of our other principles that we set up was that we wanted to make decisions by consensus. If it's a partnership, it's an equality thing. If things completely fall apart, we've got it set up so that controversies that could be resolved by consensus, get bumped up. The line staff level, the administrator or partnership level, the mucky muck level, the top administrator of each partner will go into that room and duke it out and vote if need be. It didn't get to that level very often. You hear the expression "herding cats," well,

we're herding flies. If we don't have the line staff coming along this is all going to implode on us.

Right now, it's grown into a system rather than a building. What I feel best about is my ability to impact system change, to see not only my organization moving closer to being a more humanistic organization but at the same time, seeing how I'm helping other systems change. If you're fortunate enough to be in the right place at the right time I think you can do some massive system change. I think that each group that would try to do this will do a similar evolution but they will hit some of the critical points that if they don't pass those tests they're not going further or it will take them longer.

So, what's in it for me? What I get my jollies about is being able to sit back occasionally and think back to five years ago and where we were as a region and where we are today and what part I've had in helping bring that along.

Participant #3 Profile

It's very difficult for me to pinpoint, ah, this piece led me to here, but I certainly know that the formal education piece, both my undergraduate degree and my master's degree, have prepared me in a way that's very difficult to describe. I think I have the ability to work in the macro and the micro and I think that comes in part from the formal education. So, I think the skills of understanding, of a knowledge base, the ability to learn, the ability to access resources, how to research, how to make connections, how to connect thoughts, those are the kind of skills I believe come from the educational process. I am someone who reads a lot, who integrates that information with the work they do.

What happened was over a number of years a number of us started to realize that we were bumping into each other. We were constantly at the same meetings with the same folks and with the same ideas about how to move forward in the community to serve groups of people, recognizing all of us needed each other in order to build a comprehensive program to help people who were unemployed or under-employed in our community. And so, there was a core group of us who started talking what ifs; what if we could do something different? What would we build if we could, kind of start from scratch and do things differently and so, those meetings happened over the course of a couple of years. We met several times, just exploring, you know, we were feeding off each others energy and it was real exciting. And so, a number of steps were taken, to build a service delivery system which was comprehensive and people could access on a universal basis. We really got to the point where we said, "Yeah, we're going to make a commitment." And we were weeks and weeks of bringing staff together to talk about what that would mean when we merged multiple cultures. AFS and Community Action were for years at opposite ends of things, so, it was very interesting to have agencies, agency heads, and then full staff participation in the whole collaborative process. And, bringing that along in a way that people bought in to a new philosophy and about how we serve people, you know, the customer is right, universal access, helping people have a first step, then a next step, and then doing a plan and ah, moving from an old AFS model of eligibility and that's where AFS had been, to a model of what is it that you need and how do you get there, what's your role in that and what is maybe a social service role in that, supporting that, putting the ownership back on the individual, allowing the

individual to make some choices and it was very difficult to move from one way of doing business to another.

This is an ongoing process and there were a number of things that we did consciously to move that along. There were two or three people that had very strong feelings about processes, really a sense of wanting this to be a client, customer driven center so that people had ownership of the process, ownership of their own growth, if you want to call it that. And I think that at least three of us found ourselves repeating the same things, supporting each other in that process, and then that became the ownership of a lot of folks. All along the way there were things that we had to deal with, whether it was the cost, how much was going to be shared space, and we just kind of went through them one at a time.

It was the process of the partners coming together and then how do we make sure that we've included all staff in that decision-making process so we set up teams that focused on particular functions. There was the technology team, marketing team, and others, that had staff from all the different agencies on them. Those teams worked through and reported back to the partnership team and that way we kept everybody, or anybody that wanted to be, involved in the process. There were a lot of joint trainings, probably over the course of the couple of years our total staff met together a total of four or five times, 120 folks. It was bringing folks together, mixing them up, getting them to look at the different cultures. Because when you look at education, and you look at the employment end, they're very different cultures and you can still see that if you spend time in the Newmark Center. It's even in our language. Client, customer, student. Client is really AFS, it's language they brought with them. Student is the educational side and

customer is really kind of hard for everybody to grasp. It does seem to work better because that puts the individual in a different level of control, it's a self control piece that we don't typically think of with students or clients. Our language, I really believe the words we choose sometimes are very telling about our belief systems and our perceptions.

All the agencies have worked together on numerous projects so there was a certain level of trust. I think with the partnership team there was a high level of trust very quickly. But, we worked together. We were in meetings half a day, one day a week. What happens during that time, during that process, is that, you can have a blow out, and then you see that it doesn't destroy the relationship, and then you can go on. Sort of like a marriage. And so I think there was, there is, a high degree of trust certainly in our relationships. We had numerous disagreements, shouting matches. I've seen staff in tears working with each other. All that I think is fairly healthy. If it were on an ongoing regular basis that's different but these were just typical human emotions and I think, to me, I think that shows that there is that level of trust, and people can let down the guard and be who they are and let that stuff out and then go on, work through it.

I think we got stuck both at the institutional level and at the personal level. I know there would be days when I'd be so angry at AFS because it felt like this massive culture that I wanted to change to my way of thinking. That isn't how you get there. And, my thinking has changed in the process too. So, I think it was working one on one with individuals and just making those connections and building trust. It wasn't always what I would want it to be, the outcome.

Relationship is important throughout the whole process. Whether it's the relationship that we have one on one across staffing, and that is an ongoing process, the

relationship being built all the time across staff. And it's huge because everything happens at the personal level, it just does, as much as we think we can control it, it all happens at the personal level. Then you have the relationships among agencies, and those perceptions, and among systems. There are those relationships that are even bigger than the one on one person, and so, all of it needs time and attention and you can have the best relationship and if you don't nurture that, if you don't feed it. You know, working with a group of folks, from the beginning of a collaborative concept to actually the implementation and the working of a project, it's real clear to me that the collaborative process requires more energy, more time, it's a huge commitment. It's so much easier to just go out and do something yourself. Ah, if we're willing to commit to the process, we can come out with something that is far greater that any one organization or individual could do on their own. And we can have fun doing it, and it is fun.

You look around the table and the table changes. People bring different strengths and different weaknesses to the table. So, I think the skill that maybe we all had to learn was to be able to listen to, work with, develop a relationship with all the other members at the table no matter what their communication skill was and whether it was a match with ours essentially. Because, certainly around the table, there are a lot of folks that I have a more difficult time working with than others. But, what we found is, who we can work with real well and then how do we fold everybody into that. It's trusting the process and that's the hard part and that's probably the hardest part for some of our newest members.

Oh, the whole thing is trust building. I mean, trust was right there, that was the initial piece. There's no doubt that we as partners have learned to trust each other tremendously, trust ourselves, trust our relationships, trust our ability to move the project

along. We have to constantly revisit that. Just because we establish it [trust] doesn't mean that it maintains itself. It's like any relationship, it requires constant attention. So, we're not fully there and I don't know that we ever will be. It's a constant give and take and we haven't reached the point where we're functioning as a single entity. We still have our agencies that we're all attached to.

I think the place I love being the most is in a situation where there are several people and an idea gets brought up, thrown out, we build on it, it just becomes something bigger that any one of us could have dreamed up alone. And that usually happens in a more global kind of thinking, thinking about the big picture, where we could go, how could we, you know, not so much how but where, what might it look like. The whole One Stop concept was really working in that macro. If I don't get filled up, somehow doing my job, then I'm off looking for something else to do. And, this filled me up for a very long time. It is an example of how we need things in a different way from how we're used to doing them. It's a validation of my personal leadership style. I always think of circles and it's interesting, it's hard for me to put things in that hierarchical place. No straight lines. So, this project is a foundation of that thinking.

I think trust-building, building relationships, you have to set the environment, you have to allow time for it to happen, but you need an agenda that incorporates the process whereby members start to build trust and see how they can build on each other's strengths. I think my style is more drawing out from the group, their perceptions of what we need to do and then helping them work through that. More of a facilitator, of asking questions, of listening, providing support -that's my primary role. I believe it's a

willingness to make change, to be flexible, innovative, think outside the box, even cross the line once in a while, you know, to make something happen.

Participant #4 Profile

Like many women, I went through a divorce twenty years ago and found myself faced with the privilege and obligation of being the primary caregiver for two children and wanting to care for them both adequately but also leave a model to them that women can be strong and you can move forward and you can make changes and you don't have to take what's left over. You go after what you want. And, I understand the importance of having support systems in place and that during the course of your life having plans for B and C, not hoping for them, but putting the provisions into place in case they do happen. So, after completing school, I went to work at South Coast Business Employment. I applied because they were a Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA) provider. And I was impressed with the services, the program, their focus on employment and training and the community collaboration. I became involved with the JOBS program, which is Job Opportunity and Basic Skills which was the mega-collaborative program between the college, AFS and JTPA. I had worked with the college and AFS and others, with the Dislocated Workers through mill closures, and gotten to know them quite well during that time. So, we were on a very "Hey, how's it going Sue, fine, how's it going with you?" kind of keeping in touch with each other. And I can remember vividly being in my car and running over to AFS, doing a training, getting in my car, going through the drive-through at Wendy's, and then going over to another location to do another training. And, doing that forever and ever and not really even having an office because that's what my

car was and thinking, "Oh, gosh, if we could just get in the same building; at least the same side of town, it would be so much easier."

It was a coming together and you could liken it to the round table, but there was a friendliness, a comfortableness, a familiness about it that it was like coming to the breakfast table. Even to the degree that I remember baking cranberry orange bread and taking it. You know, sharing that much of it. There were always donuts which sort of started to become a joke. "Oh look, another maple bar, it must be Wednesday." It was a congenial gathering and there was focus and the sense of how to make it interactive, how to take down walls, how to bring people together and still respecting the cultures of the different agencies that came in. Because their business, what they were going about was a little different, or the way they interacted with the client was a little different.

I think that we all came with, what do we have in common, rather than how are we different and we all were very aware of the duplication and recognized that any duplication I eliminate from here creates an opportunity to move in some other avenues. And that's because we're all serving the same client base. This was a good feeling. I don't remember coming back from any meeting hating anybody and wanting to quit my job. I can remember saying, it was a contentious meeting and there was always some urgency around timeliness, because for all of us, there were performance issues.

We had to measure our performance, not your best intentions. And so, it came down to those things that could be measured. We sat around the table and said, "Do I know what you have to be measured on?" "Do I know what your performance outcomes are?" We pooled them so everybody can see what's important. Everybody wins. And

that's what our thinking at the Newmark Center was, that you start recognizing what people need to do to generate a better performance, to acquire more funding.

It was terminology. Early on, it was deciding simple things like, what does the term "intake" mean? Understanding and absorbing that when you talk to somebody, they are more than just a letter. Thinking how do we get the client, or are they a student, a participant, you'll hear it all over the ballpark. Maybe one size fits all is not going to work here. But, I know who you're talking about.

When I think back it was the best of times. You could see that collectively, we were doing what needed to be done. We were doing it in a fairly enjoyable manner. These were people that truly liked each other. Our motto was, "come together, work together, grow together."

I believe in collaboration. I think that one of the things that I identified is that 'we' is bigger than my co-workers here or 'we' is the community and ah, people were forced out of their comfort zones, learned to acquire new information, meet new people and go a bit further. But what they came away with is a greater knowledge, a greater understanding and with the Newmark Center, that was the primary focus going in. It's not the variety of services that we offer; it's that first service. The first touch, taste, feel that people get. Are we an obstacle or are we a trampoline that we just move them forward? The barriers aren't there. We're looking at the client. This is about workforce development, another term, self-sufficiency. That's the difference.

I said this is a model. Perhaps it can influence at the state level. There needs to be some system. I have learned to listen more because first you have to build a relationship with people to express the difficult, or the confidential. So, you have to listen and you

have to listen not with the judgmental ear, but you have to listen with understanding. So, what I learned from the process was that through that process of trust, and working together, that we could share the awkward. Or we could be confrontive with each other and respectful and I learned not to talk about what I heard at the meeting on Monday, because by Thursday it could change. It was a work in progress. It was something to be proud of but not boast of. It wasn't anything I did; it was something we did. Everybody holds that same feeling. We're not done. It's not finished. The players have changed and they will continue to change, and in that process it will look different. That's evolution. I'd do it again.

Participant #5 Profile

I graduated from Oklahoma State University, got a bachelor's degree in education, played football there, and then went into the service and ended up in Vietnam for a year and that was about '69. And so I came back from the service and got a VA benefit to go to graduate school. I got a master's degree in counseling from the University of Tulsa. I had a degree in history. I had wanted to teach history at the college level but I decided to go into counseling. I had an affinity for it. People were attracted to me in that respect. The war, the Vietnam War, it obviously influenced my life. Actually, I went into counseling maybe to heal some of my own wounds. I think there was an altruistic motive back in the 60's and 70's about doing it. I think it has changed some. It's still there but in those days it was almost a spiritual involvement. It's underlying it for everybody in this field but managed care has made it so difficult to see that. There's got to be a balance eventually.

I became the clinical director for AMBIT. I came on in 1990. We had a women's program outreach, we had an adolescent program. So, we were functioning at a pretty high level. We had a women's treatment program, and we had almost all of the slots at the time. In those days the state funded by slots. You had a certain amount of money for each slot. You had to fill those slots on a monthly basis. [A slot being a human being.] So, we didn't have any problem filling them and when we did, we could market real quickly. And so, that was the heyday, before managed care came.

AMBIT was part of Community Action. We'd talk about common clients and we'd talk about self-sufficiency. I think this is the key word that is being thrown out there. From a Community Action point of view, it is a poverty situation. Its basis that poverty causes a lot of these problems is statistically true. There's a lot more alcohol and drug abuse in poverty homes than there is in middle class homes. So, self-sufficiency was the key word. That meant that people could empower themselves. Empowerment was another big word. How do you empower people? You don't want to treat people as second class. So, substance abuse had to be addressed in order to have them achieve self-sufficiency. So, we, Community Action and Adult and Family Services, would have these meetings and we would eat lunch and talk through what self-sufficiency looked like. We occasionally had a client who had achieved something come through and tell us of their experience and so it's just kind of hobnobbing and visiting.

We started to include other people in the partnership. But, then we started having nametags. It was kind of getting to know each other. All together and all that. And then we started having meetings with the SWOCC (college) architect. So, we moved in. The big problem there at the beginning was the intake piece. How do you get them down the

hall? How do you assess them? We had a weekly presentation to all; anybody who enrolled in AFS had to listen to an hour lecture from us. We would do a test and if you didn't pass that test that indicated that you had a substance abuse issue. And there's a big problem with that. We wanted to force them into an assessment because if you're going to be self-sufficient, clients didn't necessarily want to. I'm not sure AFS wanted to. Staff-wise because, we had a lot of belligerent clients coming down the hall. But, we finally got that worked out. So, their eligibility became based on getting treatment and that was the hammer. It was not voluntary. You have to help people determine their future by directives on occasion–that was the philosophy.

We talked a lot about confidentiality and I think it got embossed in everyone's mind that we couldn't really talk back and forth. We talked about how A&D was stricter that any other confidentiality. So, here we are partners. They referred their clients to us and releases hadn't been signed yet.

I think that the confrontation of that issue was embarrassing and difficult. It was the first time many people had been around it. I think they would see the clients who weren't using as better. It was a moral question. The whole point of one-stops is to get all of your support systems in one place. It should be easier because we're all together. But, a lot of people didn't understand that a lot of these people couldn't get anything together until they got their sobriety together. I think that we spent too much time talking about the structure of the building instead of making partnerships. Everybody got behind the building, but the vision was the state vision that integration was the wave of the future. We felt that we were on the cutting edge. We were on a vision. I think that the biggest barrier was that we never did cross-train one another. They didn't know what we were

doing and we didn't have any idea what they were doing, really. Because they were in their cubicles and we were down here. Language was a barrier.

So, I think there were lots of cakes and lots of lunches and too many people were getting big. Little games were played, this was all to create harmony and unity and partnership. But you know how that goes. In this situation, you had cliques that would form in those partnerships but not necessarily a full spectrum scope of partnerships.

AMBIT was supported as a partner. They knew A&D was needed. They knew all the issues that surrounded the A&D client. They get stressed out, they miss appointments, they're angry, kids are acting out. The big thing was we were like internally really autonomous but we were struggling with issues that others weren't and we were sweating bullets. We had too much autonomy. The state said that everyone was to have equity. The state A&D office saying, we really love this partnership and at the same time, they didn't support us as a real partner. We were treated like everyone else out on the street, even though we were locked into this thing. There were external forces. So, there was almost an adversarial relationship with the state people that was occurring.

It was very difficult. The Newmark Center, everybody in there was basically a non-profit agency except us, but we were viewed as a non-profit agency. But we were for-profit. If there was anybody who was after the money to stay alive, it was us. So, there was always that kind of disparity of understanding. AFS, because they got some pressure from other outside A&D agencies, gave referrals to outside agencies because they wanted equity and they went to the state and the state told them it had to be equitable. And we were the partner and we were dying out here. It became difficult to survive. It became very hard. AMBIT dissolved and we lost an A&D provider in town.

When we went down, I didn't feel like I had a partnership. If it had been brought up at the table, the big table, I think that it could have been seen, no matter how it ended, it could have been seen that we're all in this together. Even if you have to leave, we're in this together, because of what you've done before this moment. But, that didn't happen. We'd go around, check in type of thing. But, some of the issues were so deep. As for what we were going through personally-there was such joviality all the time that it didn't seem the thing to do to bring it up. A lot of information was shared in the smoking section. The non-smokers didn't have any informal time like that.

There were external forces. I think that the partners need to understand what every partner is going through internally so nobody gets isolated or feels isolated from the partnership. I think you can get to know somebody, that's where the lunches helped, but you want to have a professional understanding as well, not just a friendship. I felt that partnerships were expendable, if they had their own difficulties. You should have a contingency plan and no one had one. It was a very innocent, get caught up in the moment vision.

But, we still provided quality services and it's a real shame that there's not an A&D piece there.

Major Themes

A theme, according to Polit and Hungler (1987) might be a phrase, sentence, or paragraph embodying ideas or making an assertion about some topic. The primary question or area for research involves the interpersonal processes and dynamics that occur during the collaborative experience. In this study, the themes which were prevalent

throughout the profiles focused on: (1) the shared cultures of helping professionals; (2) the historical health and human service system and its inability to effectively serve its clients well; (3) the interpersonal processes involved in this intense level of collaboration; and, (4) how the collaborative experience affected these peoples lives, both professionally and personally.

Data analysis resulted in the formulation of five themes common to all participants. These themes were: (a) sharing a culture of helping, (b) feelings of frustration with current system, (c) having a sense of readiness to change and make change, (d) working through the process, and (5) building and sustaining relationship. The following section discusses these themes, using examples from the participants' own narrative. The narrator's words are indented and the narrator is identified by the letter P for participant and the respective number, 1,2,3,4 or 5, based on the sequence established in the body of the text.

Sharing a Culture of Helping

Each of the study participants shared a common culture of being a helper. Schein (1992) defines the culture of a group as "A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems"(p.12).

In their own particular way, each had found a career which allowed his/her inherent need to help others be fulfilled. One interesting aspect of this culture to me was

the aspect of risk-taking for the purpose of helping others and helping oneself. To be a helper, in this group, was to be strong, confident, pushing the limits of the known norms. The intent was to improve the current situation. It was as though the role of helper carries with it a mantle of invincibility where one can break the rules in advocating for a better world.

> P1: I emerged as a person who could do anything. I challenged people I had no right to challenge. They tolerated me but I was over the line. It was very exciting to me to think I could make a difference. I had a little bit of, ah, there was this invincible feeling that I had, that I was different, that I could do whatever I wanted and if I failed, I would be fine. People would help me along the way. Generally, I believed that I am my brothers' keeper but they are mine as well.

P3: "I believe it's a willingness to make change, to be flexible, innovative, think outside the box, even cross the line once in a while, you know, to make something happen."

The importance of this shared culture is that it served the function of what is known in physics as the strange attractor. A strange attractor is a basin of attraction that serves as a boundary for a system. It sustains the order inherent in chaos (Wheatley, 1992, p. 122).

P.2: "There's always order in everything. Chaordic. A common bond here is that we're all here to help people. It's a pretty shared set of values. There is a fair amount of common vibes or something. It is the clientele, seeing the potential."

The strength of this collaborative venture was that the focus was primarily on the clients, not on the providers of care. The issues were how to serve the clients more effectively and efficiently by changing the system. Whenever differences of opinion or conflicting agendas threatened to "melt down" the process, the participants brought the

focus back to the client and his/her needs. This focus provided the energy for both containment of the process so it did not spin out of control and also for growth.

Feelings of Frustration with the Current System

The individuals involved in this collaboration had each experienced frustration with the current system because of the perceived competition for clients, wasting of limited resources, and generally feeling that they were not serving their clients as well as might be possible in a different sort of system. As heads of local poverty agencies, they were aware of the redundancy and duplication of services among themselves that interfered with their ability to provide comprehensive services and affected their own performance objectives adversely.

Gray (1989) writes:

> Turbulence cannot be managed individually because disruptions and their causes cannot be adequately anticipated or averted by unilateral action. In the face of turbulence, the ability of any single organization to accurately plan for its future is limited by the unpredictable consequences of actions taken by seemingly unrelated organizations. Collaboration offers an antidote to turbulence by building a collective capacity to reduce these unintended consequences. Collaborative alliances represent one critical mode of adaptation to turbulent conditions (p.28).

It seems that the traditional Western ideas of the ideal individual (i.e., self-sufficiency, autonomy, and competition with others to stand out and go it alone) are no longer working. At least not in complex, change driven environments. And for a group of professionals who are motivated to help others, this ideal creates barriers to optimum functioning. This group of professionals was growing increasingly aware of this as they continuously bumped up against each other and their collective systems. Their frustration finally reached a critical point where they felt a strong need to act to correct the situation.

> P1: So, one day I'm at [agency] and I see this mom walking with this child who is probably 4 or 5 years old, and I know that mom from [agency], so its typical weather, sort of raining lightly, and I'm thinking, ah, I wonder where she's coming from? Because she's coming from Coos Bay and we're in North Bend, and of course she came to [agency], she needed food. Where she's come from was the welfare office in Coos Bay. She had walked five fucking miles in the rain with that kid and I think for the first time, this is ridiculous. These agencies are not working together and look what happens. I can still see her face. I feel so strongly that poverty agencies need to work together. Because the people didn't have a single issue: it wasn't an educational issue, or an income issue, a health issue. The issues were multiple and I think people began to feel that a multiple approach with people working together was going to be the answer.

P2:"We [poverty agencies] were providing a lot of the same services, same curriculum, the whole bit, yeah, we were competing. We were stealing each other's clients and the performance that relates to it."

> P3: What happened was over a number of years a number of us started to realize that we were bumping into each other. We were constantly at the same meetings with the same folks and with the same ideas about how to move forward in the community to serve groups of people, recognizing that all of us needed each other in order to build a comprehensive program to help people.

P4:"Oh gosh, if we [poverty agencies] could just get into the same building, at least the same side of town, it would be so much easier. Any duplication I eliminate from here creates an opportunity to move in some other avenues. We're all serving the same client base."

Gray (1989, p. 58) states, "(t)he recognition by stakeholders that their desired outcomes are inextricably linked to the actions of other stakeholders is the fundamental basis of collaboration." I like to think of this concept as a community garden with each participant tending their own individual plots but all requiring the same healthy soil, water, and fertilizer for a healthy harvest. And, the benefits of the harvest would be

shared with the community of gardeners. This is such a difficult concept for professionals trained to be independent and autonomous that it actually caused somatic problems for many of the individuals involved in the process. There were reports of stomach complaints, headaches, vague body aches, and even one case of severe conversion reaction where a woman could not move her limbs to get out of bed in the morning to go to work. It was a total mind/body experience for these people.

A Sense of Readiness to Change and Make Change

These individuals knew each other well from attending the same meetings in the community over a period of years. Also, some knew each other socially. It is a small community. The foundation had been laid in terms of establishing patterns of relationship and communication. What was needed was the spark, the incentive, to move outside the existing circle of interaction to create a new way of being in the world with each other and with the community.

Returning to the concept of autopoiesis, one can see that these individuals and organizations were each undergoing fluctuations and changes within themselves which allowed a structure, the collaboration, to emerge. Jantsch (1980), defines autopoiesis as "the characteristic of living systems to continuously renew themselves and to regulate this process in such a way that the integrity of their structure is maintained (p. 7). Wheatley (1992) writes:

> What we observe in ourselves as well as in all living entities, are boundaries that both preserve us from and connect us to the infinite complexity of the outside world. Autopoiesis, then, points to a different universe. Not the fragile, fragmented world we attempt to hold together, but a universe rich in processes that support growth and coherence, individuality and community. (p. 18)

The study participants' experience demonstrates how self-organization develops in living systems. One activity leads to another, building on each other, connecting and transforming, in some sort of inherent harmony or order. It was a developmental process, requiring time and knowledge of themselves and each other.

> P1: It's a small community. We see people daily in meetings. We see people socially. We see people in a support setting. There was a lot of work going on behind the scenes so that the people at the table already had a vision. You could see the time was right. So often you have a vision and there is no nest or cradle for it, it dies. You could see the writing on the wall as far as the world getting ready for us. Success has to do with a time and a place and players. That it was a time to be born, like a child, and I don't think you can birth that same child again.
>
> It was a door open, not for one person but for a whole community, and we all just walked through it, recognizing that, you have to pass through developmental stages in order to lead to something new. Something visionary takes some stability. We pulled off a broader vision for the state of Oregon.
>
> P2: We need to put our efforts together and work together rather than have four or five different programs. We've talked about bringing our programs together, now's our chance. Back in the beginning it was a vision of gee, this isn't working well, there must be a better way. So, we started talking about all this collaboration and integration stuff and we really didn't have a clue what we were talking about. I think one of the reasons we've been able to come as far as we have is because in the rural areas, you have to know each other. We knew each other fairly well. We'd learned ways to adapt to different personalities and just generally got along. So, that's what really pulled us together through the times when we wanted to kill each other.

P3: "We met several times, just exploring, you know, we were feeding off each others energy and it was real exciting. And so a number of steps were taken to build a comprehensive service delivery system that people could access on a universal basis. We really got to a point where we said, yeah, we're going to make a commitment."

The key element here is the nature of the relationships formed within this group of stakeholders. The foundation had been established for a change process to occur. They

knew each other and felt a sense of trust and respect. There was a common broad vision and a collective energy to fuel the realization of this vision.

Working Through the Process of Collaboration

Gray (1989), writes, "Collaboration is essentially an emergent process rather than a prescribed state of organization" (p. 15). She further characterized this process as being dynamic and evolutionary. Gray has identified three distinct phases that address certain fundamental issues which are common to collaborative projects. The three phases are: problem-setting, direction-setting, and implementation. This report will focus on the first two phases at this time.

Phase 1: "The problem-setting phase concerns getting to the table so that face-to-face dialogue can begin."(Gray, 1989, p.57). The issues addressed during this phase are: common definition of the problem, commitment to collaborate, identification of stakeholders, legitimacy of stakeholders, convener characteristics, and identification of resources. The core group of stakeholders knew that to be successful they would have to bring in other players. Also, no one person or group had ownership of the vision. As more and more players were brought into the collaboration, the vision changed and had to be re-negotiated on an on-going basis.

> P1: You had to have a partnership. About 2 ½ years ago before it, [The Newmark Center] started to get built we began to sit at the table. There was a lot of work going on behind the scenes so that people at the table already had a vision. We had a commitment, the leadership team, the partnership, that everything else would come second to these meetings. People gave up everything. It was like the sacred time.
>
> P2: We started meeting every Wednesday from 7:30/am to noon. And right there is one of the keys to the whole partnership thing. Ah, that we saw each other similar to what we see our spouses. Like, people would

> come dragging in with curlers still in their hair, or would have forgotten to shower, or get dressed, didn't have their coffee yet. We did that for basically two years. We started off talking collaboration and integration and really didn't know what we were talking about. We were talking about a fairly nice, easy-going co-habitation. But, you know, we hadn't gotten married yet.

P4: "It was a coming together, like coming to the breakfast table. Oh look, another maple bar, it must be Wednesday."

P5: "In this situation, you had cliques that would form in these partnerships but not necessarily a full spectrum scope of partnerships. It became difficult to survive. I think we spent too much time talking about the structure of the building instead of making partnerships. I didn't feel like I had a partnership."

Phase 2: Direction-setting involves certain procedural and substantive issues (Gray, 1989). During this phase, stakeholders identify and sort out the issues that brought them to the table. Stakeholders articulate their values and begin to appreciate a sense of purpose or direction. The components of direction-setting are: establishing ground rules, agenda setting, organizing sub-groups, joint information search, exploring options, and reaching agreement. Each of the individuals involved in the collaboration in this study, wanted to improve the quality of life for their clients. However, how they went about that was very different. To return to the garden analogy, a rose gardener's needs are very different from a gardener growing herbs or vegetables. Yes, the basic stuff–water, soil, fertilizer is the same but the quantity and quality of these elements differ in significant ways. They had to manage the process so that they each received what they needed yet did not harm another in the collaboration. And hopefully, to help the others as well as themselves. This was the challenge.

P1: Its one thing to say that we'll all work together. It's another thing to do the practical, everyday pieces of that. Some of the issues we had were very mechanical or practical and some of them were philosophical, more nebulous. We could see that bringing the staffs together to know each other and appreciate each other's work was going to be a task. Everywhere there's a pecking order or class system. But the more people work together and the more people talk to each other and love together, the more, I think, they can appreciate that each person is making a valuable contribution and the result is good. At the leadership level, we worked hard to give everyone equal voice.

And we met outside the meeting. If anybody missed a meeting we always called and said, "Are you ok, I'll catch you up". [Member of team] was just compulsive about taking adequate minutes and they were mailed out on time to the people who didn't make it and could be kept informed. It carried on.

P2: In the beginning we set up ground rules and among the first was a 'no walk out' rule. You know, no matter how heated things would get, nobody would stomp out of the room. There's this movie where there's this guy and he's made of mercury and he keeps getting blown up and the little pieces start coming back together. That's what our partnership team was like. Yeah, we'd come back together as a body again.

One of our principles was that we would respect each other's organizations and their drop dead performance measures. We made a dying pact with ourselves that we would not get sucked into Salem politics.

What actually came up was organizational tradition and organizational culture. Diversity is one of the big buzz-words today. It's not just race, gender, and ethnic background but it's organization also. You've got to learn to live with and accept cultural differences between organizations. It took us a long time to figure out that so much of this controversy is organizational language. Some of the things we tried to do was start over again and it's really hard developing a new language.

Communication and the sharing of information and the acceptance that we are going to make decisions together, keeping the information going and assuming we're all doing the best we can, with the resources we currently have. One of our principles that we set up was that we wanted to make decisions by consensus. If it's a partnership thing, it's an equality thing.

P3: It was very difficult moving from one way of doing business to another. This is an ongoing process. There were two or three people that had very strong feelings about processes. It was the process of the

> partner's coming together and then how we make sure that we've included all staff in that decision-making process. It was bringing folks together, mixing them up, getting them to look at different cultures. Its even in our language: client, customer, student. Our language, I really believe the words we choose sometimes are very telling about our belief systems and our perceptions.
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> P4: The focus was on how to make it interactive, how to take down walls, how to bring people together and still respecting the cultures of different agencies. We all came with what do we have in common rather than how are we different. We had to measure our performance, not our best intentions. We sat around the table and said, "Do I know what you have to be measured on? Do I know what your performance measures are?" We pooled them so everybody can see what's important. Everybody wins.
>
> It was terminology. What does the term intake mean? How do we get the client, or are they a student, a participant? Maybe one size is not going to work here?
>
> P5: I think the biggest barrier was that we never cross-trained one another. Language was a barrier. The big thing was that we were like internally really autonomous but we were struggling with issues the others weren't and we were sweating bullets. We had too much autonomy. It was very difficult. The Newmark Center, everybody in there was basically a non-profit agency except us, but we were viewed as a non-profit. So, there was this kind of disparity of understanding.
>
> It was a difficult process for some of the participants who did not have as large a client base or were not funded through the same channels as the larger, more powerful organizations. Even though the participants had made consensus a ground rule, it was not always achieved. Power and inequality were present as elements in both the process and product.

The study participants were able to develop a shared sense of the nature of the problem they were addressing. They were each committed to the process of collaboration, and to the time the process would require. They seemed to understand that if they were given time and space to work together, their vision would emerge into a new system, grounded in relationship and communication.

Building and Sustaining Relationships within the Collaborative Alliance

It is evident from these participants' experiences that the processes and phases identified by Gray are significant and useful, at least within the context of this study. However, there is another element that these processes and phases do not address and that is the element of relationship building. This study's participants found in their experience that relationship building is the key to a successful collaboration. Wheatley (1992) writes "(i) f nothing exists independent of its relationship with something else, we can move away from our need to think of things as polar opposites. What is critical is the relationship created between the person and the setting" (p. 39). The two key components to relationship building are trust and respect.

> P1: There's a certain element of trust. Its just a matter of staying open, of sharing, of not seeing yourself as the only person who has control, needs control, its constantly an exercise in giving up, giving up everything. I don't think there was a single meeting where someone wasn't uptight about something...whatever it was, we just talked about it. We pretty much just plowed through it.

P2: "It's mostly relationship. Trust and respect. I think that you can get a group of people from the most diverse organizations known to mankind, personkind, and as long as there was a relationship that was allowed to develop, you had basic trust and faith in each other, and a respect for each other, their organizations can do anything."

> P3: We were in meetings half a day, one day a week. What happens during that time, during that process, is that you have a blow out, and then you see that it doesn't destroy the relationship and then you can go on. Sort of like a marriage. I think we got stuck at both the institutional and the personal level. So, I think it was working one on one with individuals and just making those connections and building trust. It wasn't always what I would want it to be, the outcome.
>
> Relationship is important throughout the whole process. And it's huge because everything happens at the personal level. All of it needs time and

attention. You can have the best relationship and if you don't nurture that, if you don't feed it. It's real clear to me that the collaborative process requires more time and more energy, it's a huge commitment. Its so much easier to just go out and do something yourself.

The whole thing is trust building...that was the initial piece. There's no doubt that we as partners have learned to trust each other tremendously, trust ourselves, trust our relationships, trust our ability to move the project along.

I think trust building, building relationships, you have to set the environment, you have to allow time for it to happen, but you have to have an agenda that incorporates the process whereby members start to build trust and see how they can build on each others strengths.

P4: First you have to have a relationship with people to express the difficult. So, you have to listen...not with the judgmental ear, but you have to listen with understanding. What I learned through the process was that through the process if trust and working together, we could share the awkward. Or we could be confrontive with each other and respectful.

P5: A lot of information was shared in the smoking section. The non-smokers didn't have any informal time like that. I think that the partners need to understand what every partner's going through internally so nobody gets isolated, or feels isolated from the partnership. I think you can get to know somebody, that's where the lunches helped, but you want to have a professional understanding as well, not just a friendship.

To understand what happened, let's return to the image of the community garden. The natural processes of seasons, rain, sunlight, provide the essential energy for growth. In this collaboration, those processes were: time, which allowed relationships to develop; being present at meetings and abiding by the "no walk out" rule so that people had to work through difficult emotional issues; communicating not just factual information but also feelings in an environment which was safe for this type of expression; and a collective enjoyment in the work and in each other. For the most part, these people had fun doing their work and received satisfaction from it.

Relationship of Themes to Each Other and to the Theoretical Framework

This research focused on the following questions: (1) What are the essential dynamics involved in establishing and maintaining a collaborative partnership; (2) What is the nature of conflict and how is conflict managed within a collaborative partnership; (3) What decision-making and problem-solving processes are critical to the success of a collaborative project; and, (5) What is the meaning of relationship and communication within a collaborative partnership? I believe that this study provides answers to these questions.

The process of forming and maintaining an interprofessional team is a challenge. Developing team collaboration is a difficult process and formal education does little to train professionals to work together in the provision of care. Teamwork is not easy and getting a group of people together, getting along, and sharing information with one another does not constitute collaboration.

The challenge is to create a culture that fosters teamwork. The experiences of these participants demonstrate that there are five basic elements to the collaborative process: (1) having a shared culture so that there is some common ground; (2) having a common goal or vision or, as in this case, a common feeling of frustration with the current system and a sense that they could do better if they just worked together; (3) a readiness to change how they worked together and to make change within the system; (4) a sense that now is the time to do it; and, (5) making and taking the time to work through the processes of team-building, and developing and sustaining relationships, allowing trust and respect to develop. Throughout the process, time seems to be a key element in developing a collaborative team. Being together over time allowed the participants

opportunities to practice collaborative behaviors such as listening, attending to another person's opinion, and being able to set aside their own egos and agendas. Trust developed through melting down and then salvaging the relationships through communication over and over again. Another key element was the ability to reflect on the process. Much of the energy and attention of this group focused on the process itself. When meltdown occurred, either individually or as a group, they would come together and talk about what happened. They looked after one another, caring for each other and for the process. It was very much a praxis of collaboration, renewing and changing over time.

The leadership team worked to bring the line staff into the process through team building activities. One involved joining staff from the different agencies into small groups to design and build a quilt square which represented the concept of The Newmark Center. Each small group created a square and then the squares were joined together to create a large quilt symbolizing the agencies working together. This quilt is currently hanging in the entryway of the Newmark Center. Also, staff from all the agencies were formed into teams to work on special projects (i.e., the technology team). This gave people a chance to experience what it would be like to work together, and to begin to develop behaviors that would lead to success. When problems arose, processes were developed to deal with them that included leaders and line staff from the multiple agencies.

One insight relevant to the first question, "What are the essential dynamics involved in establishing and maintaining a collaborative partnership?" may be found in the metaphor of the Breakfast Table. The Breakfast Table represents the coming together during the sacred time for the common purpose of working on a mutually defined

problem nested in the common vision of making the world a better place for the poor and disenfranchised. Through spending time together, people came to know each other; trust and respect were allowed to develop. The team members were committed to the idea that if they just showed up, remained true to the process, something good would happen. This is where trust in each other and in the process is apparent. This ability to trust in the process is like the improvisational jazz-session between Miles Davis and Gil Evans that produced "Sketches of Spain." It's a process of making and taking the time, honoring the time, trusting each other, and allowing the process to unfold. Again, using the musical metaphor, there was an external boundary holding the shape so that it did not spiral out of control leaving nothing but disorder. Davis and Evans had a musical script from an old guitar composition that they based their collaboration on. The partners in the Newmark Center had their own disciplines and agencies to acknowledge and adhere to in terms of rules, regulations, and culture that constituted the external boundary. This presented a source of steadiness, but also a source for conflict.

There were inherent inequalities among the partners that presented a potential for conflict related to power and its demonstration. One participant was the matriarch of the group and received respect and a certain degree of expectation. At least in her mind, she felt responsible for pushing the project along. She was nearing retirement and perhaps that contributed to her sense of urgency about getting it done. Another participant was head of the largest agency involved in the collaboration. Historically, that agency was seen as being in an adversarial relationship with the other agencies. However, in this collaboration, this individual stressed the importance of consensus and equality. He also became the scribe, taking responsibility for the recording and distribution of the minutes.

There was one participant who was mainly concerned with process. Her role became the peacekeeper and healer. She was constantly asking, "What happened here?" and "Are you ok?" Another participant was relatively new to the group and came from a small agency without a lot of clout. What she did bring to the table was a pair of fresh eyes to observe the process and behaviors. She provided a source of neutrality, like a Switzerland among the European powers. And finally, there was a participant who was clearly the outsider. His agency served the "unworthy" poor, those with chemical addiction issues. Also, he was from a for-profit agency and had a different set of needs and priorities. He felt powerless and he eventually lost his place at the table.

The second question, "What is the nature of conflict and how is conflict managed?" may be considered through the metaphor of Mercury Man, as presented in the participant profiles. Mercury Man represents the ability of the partners to separate and come back together following a melt down. The resiliency of the partnership and its ability to withstand conflict and disintegration is evident. The relationships, held together with trust and respect, sustained themselves through the conflict. One key element to this resiliency was the partners' ability to reflect on the process. This was accomplished through the taking and distribution of minutes, follow-up telephone calls to one another, asking questions to clarify what occurred and how it was perceived, and informal time spent together. The minutes reflected the orderly flow of ideas and actions: the one-on-one time with each other reflected bringing Mercury Man back together after a blow out, and the informal time reflected the letting go of anger, disappointment, and control and moving on to the next moment or meeting.

The third question, "What decision-making and problem-solving processes are critical to the success of a collaborative project?" is appreciated within the context of organizational culture and language. Two key concepts relating to decision-making and problem-solving are respect for diversity and developing a common language. Denzin (1999) writes, "Language is how social organization and power are defined and contested and the place where our sense of selves, our subjectivity, is constructed. Understanding language as competing discourses, competing ways of giving meaning and organizing the world, makes language a site of exploration, struggle"(p. 313).

Language around how the recipient of service was conceptualized and described presented obstacles related to the philosophical practice models that are the beliefs that direct individuals when they are working. One significant practice model in the situation involved how the providers of service perceived the recipient of service. Was the recipient a student, a client, a consumer, or a patient? Was the recipient an individual, a family, an agency, or a community? The team had to develop a common language based on a common perception of the person(s) served.

A second practice model which caused conflict was the degree of self-efficacy, or self-sufficiency which the recipient of service, whom I will note as the client to lessen confusion, is granted based on the conceptual framework of the organization. A student is considered to be fairly autonomous, just needing a nudge in the right direction to succeed. A client is a bit more dependent, requiring certain services to enable him/her to become self-sufficient. A consumer knows what he/she wants and purchases services with little or no assistance. A patient is almost totally dependent on the service provider. These were major areas of conflict, but as one participant said, "We just pretty much plowed

through." Again, being with the process, maintaining trust and respect, and allowing the best outcome to emerge was the dynamic that happened in this collaboration.

And finally, what are the meaning of relationship and communication within a collaborative partnership? This question is informed by the statement from one participant: "Everything happens at the personal level." Relationship and communication are everything. The one negative case actually serves to illustrate the validity of these concepts. This participant did not develop relationships with the other partners and had to eventually leave the partnership. How and why this was allowed to happen is a study in itself and outside the scope of this report. However, the experience does reveal the critical nature of relationship building, having trust and respect and even love allowed to foster, having a common understanding of the nature of the work through a language which all partners relate to, and ultimately being able let the process unfold. One participant stated, "It was a work in progress. We're not done; we're not finished. The players have changed and they will continue to change and in that process, it will look different. That's evolution."

How do these themes relate to each other and to the theoretical framework? I can explain this best in a picture. See Figure 2.

The key elements are a shared culture which provided the strange attractor to hold the elements in a boundary; feelings of frustration or discomfort with the current situation which provided the impetus for change; an energy or readiness to make change; belonging and identifying with the process; and developing and sustaining relationships

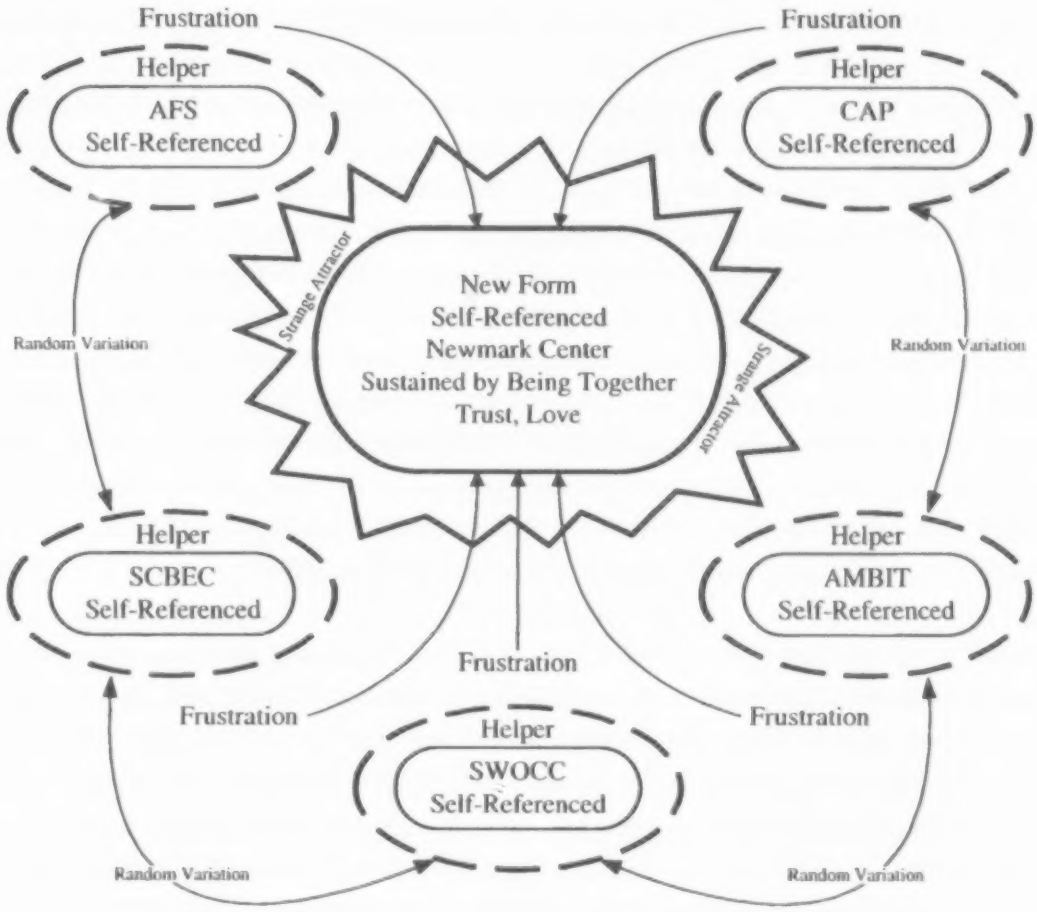

Figure 2. Model for Newmark Center collaboration.

through trust and respect. Each agency was its own self-referenced entity protecting its own boundaries through its own culture. Random variations were coming in from outside causing a disequilibrium within the agency's boundary. This imbalance resulted in a new

energy pattern, a change that brought the agencies and individuals together for the development of the Newmark Center. The center circle in this diagram represents the Newmark Center, which is itself representative of the evolution and emergence of the once separate agencies into a new, collaborative structure. Once together, the challenge is to transform from individual self-referencing entities to a collaborative self-referencing partnership.

Validity and Reliability Checks

The process of crafting the participant profiles required listening over and over again to the actual interview tapes, reviewing many times the tape transcriptions, thinking through and reflecting on the aspects of the situation from my personal perspective, and from what I know of the participants and the project. I tried not to present the data in any sort of pre-reflective manner. Throughout the process I attempted to sift out material which could be effectively removed without jeopardizing the holistic nature of each profile. I tried to see into the story, to find aspects of the culture, language, events, and attitudes that made the collaborative experience unique.

Earlier in Chapter 3, I cited Wolcott (1999) and listed his nine methods to encourage reliability and validity. In my research, here is how my data analysis met the validity and reliability criteria.

Talk little, listen a lot: Data analysis began for me in listening to the taped recording of the interviews several times prior to transcribing. I described in my journal the setting of the interview, and while listening to the participant's words, I relived the interview experience. Through this process, I was able to be deeply involved in the

process, not just the words but also the nuances and contexts which gave richness to the interviews. For instance, Participant One was interviewed in her home in Salem. We sat on a red velvet sofa, drank tea from delicate china cups, ate finger cookies, listened to Mozart, and intermittently played with her three year old granddaughter. Participant Two was interviewed in his office, where he was literally surrounded by hundreds of tiny matchbox cars. Participant Three was interviewed in her new office located on the top floor of the administration building on the college's campus. It was a promotion for her. Participant 4 was interviewed in my office, behind locked doors on an inpatient psychiatric unit. This was her choice. She sat in the chair I use for counseling patients and staff. And Participant Five was interviewed in his new setting, a boys juvenile shelter facility. There were bars on the windows. So, as I listened to the recordings, I could place myself back into those settings. I listened a lot.

Record accurately: I transcribed the tapes myself, listening over and over for pauses, exclamations, questioning tones, laughter, and other subtle communications. The transcriptions were woven together with the threads of conversation from our dialogue. For the final profile, I teased my comments out, leaving a picture of the participant's experience.

Begin writing early: Each time I transcribed, I wrote notes to myself in my journal, in the margins of the transcription, on sticky notes, or whatever I had available. I completed one entire profile before I began on another interview so that I could be with that person's experience totally for that period of time.

Let readers see for themselves: This is the beauty of the participant profile as a method of describing experience. It does allow the reader to live the story with the storyteller. My role is to make it readable.

Report fully, be candid, and seek feedback: These three are combined. I did these. To be certain, I had the participants review the draft profiles and give me feedback on whether or not this really was a description of their experience, as they lived it and then lived it again in the telling of it to me.

Try to achieve balance or rigorous subjectivity: I believe this goal was attained through the reflexive dialogue that occurred between myself and the participant, and through member checking and peer review of the material.

Write accurately: This was a constant and difficult struggle. It was always a temptation to impose my own rendering of the experience. What I sought was a blending of my perspective with the participant's so that understanding of the experience may be achieved. Through accurate writing, this understanding may be communicated.

The themes were checked for validity and reliability through peer review by a colleague who is a clinical social worker, and through careful comparison with each participant's narrative, looking for commonalities and patterns. But, in the end, it really does come back to me and my own sense of trustworthiness with the material. It was primarily an intuitive process. I did not begin with a set of themes in mind. The themes arose out of the passages that I marked as interesting. And then, one passage related to another, one theme to another until the connections and interpretative categories became evident. This was my contribution as a researcher.

Summary

To summarize this chapter, I asked myself what did I learn? What connections were there among the participants interviewed? And, what did the experience mean to me? I learned that doing qualitative research using in-depth participant interviewing is itself a collaborative experience. A relationship between myself and each participant developed through communication, trust, and mutual respect. I gained deep appreciation for the time and effort required to do this even on as small a scale as a research project. The themes and patterns presented in this report demonstrate that it was through the development over time of relationship, based on trust and respect, that determined the success of a new system being created: one based on interdependency and collaboration.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS

This chapter concludes this study. I discuss the basic assumptions that I made in doing the study. Second, a sort of recipe is presented for fostering interprofessional collaboration. Even though this study is influenced by the particular context in which this collaboration occurred, still it is possible to sketch a basic template that might be helpful to others attempting a project similar to this one. And, finally, I express thoughts and suggestions for future research in the area of interorganizational collaboration.

Basic Assumptions

Capra (1996) suggests that "the crucial role of language in human evolution was not the ability to exchange ideas, but the increased ability to cooperate"(p. 294). Overall, the potential for collaboration looks both promising and sobering. In order to capitalize on the potential, we need to understand much more about the fundamental assumptions underlying collaborative processes and the practical dynamics of how these processes unfold and can be managed. (Gray, 1989, p. 54)

This study of the lived experience of an intense, interprofessional collaboration has added to the knowledge and understanding regarding the fundamental assumptions and the practical dynamics underlying collaborative processes. So, based on the results of this study, what has been learned about basic assumptions related to the process of collaboration?

One assumption we can make is that currently, very few health and human service professionals are educated or trained for participating in interprofessional collaboration.

Drinka and Clarke (2000) write, "Unfortunately most clinical healthcare providers were trained in their own autonomous health professions and were not formally taught a foundation for team practice. Few team members are prepared to address the language differences, the inevitable conflict issues, the different problem-solving styles, and the systems issues that teamwork brings"(p. 3).

The individuals involved in the development of the Newmark Center were from different health and human service agencies including education. Their language systems were different. Whom were they serving: customer, client, student? Their funding sources were different. Their expectations and performance measures were different. Their cultures were different. But, they had a common set of values. These values were helping their clients obtain self-sufficiency, seeking integrative solutions to their problems, and serving the community. They were each focused on improving the quality of life for their service populations. They were all helpers. And it was this set of common values that gave meaning to their work and provided the foundation for a new collaborative identity. This new identity pierced their individual, autonomous barriers and allowed for interdependence to develop.

> Values may be considered as one of the essential 'building blocks' of this identity formation process. Here, values represent meanings and the basis for internalized norms and standards of the professional culture characteristic of the individuals own behavior and self-concept. Values become the basis for the life themes or stories we tell to make sense of our lives. (Drinka and Clark, 2000, p. 68)

A second assumption is that interprofessional collaboration is an active, dynamic developmental process. It is developmental both for the individual person, for the individual agencies, and for the collaborative organization.

> Becoming a member of a collaborative team should change a person, both in terms of overt behavior and with respect to the way the person thinks about his or her work. This transformation is a developmental process that progresses through stages, although individuals may advance, regress, and stagnate at different levels at different times. As the team develops more experience in working together, transformations occur within members that reflect an internal change in the thought processes and normative assumptions on which they base their behavior and practice. (Drinka and Clarke, 2000, p. 86)

Through communication and relationship, these individuals were able to establish trust, the first step in the development of a collaborative identity. From this foundation, they were able to bring together a common vision and a plan for birthing that vision. Through this process of relationship building, a set of group norms and behaviors were established.

A third assumption we can make is that collaboration is an evolutionary process. It is evolutionary for the individuals and for the system or environment.

> The value of teamwork itself comes to displace the model of the 'unidisciplinary' practitioner into which the providers were originally socialized in their respective professional programs…In this sense, interdependence displaces independence and leads to the recognition of the limits of each profession when dealing with multifaceted problems. (Drinka and Clark, 2000, p. 89)

The strong ties of service to the poor and disenfranchised and to the community in which they lived provided the connective tissue that held these individuals together and stabilized their patterns of interactions and processes.

"A self-organizing system has the freedom to grow and evolve, guided only by one rule. It must remain consistent with itself and its past. The presence of this guiding rule allows for both creativity and boundaries, for evolution and coherence, for determinism and free will" (Wheatley, 1992, p. 134).

The practical dynamics of this particular collaboration relate to the djalectic between autonomy and interdependence. This dialectic is operational both within each individual and also, within the organizations. Each individual is an autonomous, self-referential entity, and also an interdependent member of a larger, self-referential organization. So, this dialectic presents a constantly dynamic, intense, interactive interplay between the actions of give and take, the attitudes of protection and generosity, and between self-knowledge and collective knowledge, both at the individual and at the organizational level. This play is the process of collaboration.

> We'll need to stop describing tasks and instead facilitate process. We will need to become savvy about how to build relationships, how to nurture growing evolving things. All of us will need better skills in listening, communication, and facilitating groups, because these are the talents that build strong relationships. What gives power its charge, whether positive or negative, is the quality of relationships. Those who relate through coercion, or from a disregard of the other person, create negative energy. Those who are open to others, in their fullness create positive energy. Love in organizations then, is the most potent source of power we have. (Wheatley, 1992, p. 39)

As one team member said, "But the more people work together, and the more people talk to each other and love together, the more I think, they can appreciate that each person is making a valuable contribution and the result is good." The development and implementation of The Newmark Center presented a new way of being together in an organizational relationship model that is based on the quality of relationships. Relationships develop and are sustained through communication, and through the development and demonstration of trust and respect.

Fostering Interprofessional Collaboration

This study has changed me. I work daily as a member of an interprofessional team. The basic principles and dynamics that are evident from this study are also relative to my situation, and I believe to others. If one were to develop a recipe for interprofessional collaboration based on this research it might look like this:

1. Mix together a group of individuals with a common core set of values.
2. Marinate in situations where they can establish relationship and communication and begin to develop trust.
3. Add ingredients from different professional background and cultures for spice.
4. Cut in communication skills that express empathy, respect, and tolerance.
5. Fold in a common vision, set of goals and outcomes and simmer for a period of time to allow the ingredients to integrate and form a collective identity yet maintaining the unique flavors of each of the special and unique individuals.

I believe this recipe can be used as a basic template but, at the same time, cautioning against any generic sort of application of this particular experience. As one participant said, "It was a time to be born, like a child, and I don't think you can birth that same child again."

I would like to recommend the following resources to any reader interested in further research into the subject of interprofessional collaboration: Drinka & Clarke (2000), Gray (1989), and Wheatley (1992). And for any group setting out on a collaborative adventure, I offer this guidance: be committed to the process and let the

outcome unfold naturally. The outcome should be the result of the collaborative energies and ideas of all the participants. Expect to see thinking errors and problem behaviors such as inappropriate or misplaced anger, hurt, and feelings of inadequacy. People who are accustomed to working independently may find it very difficult to work interdependently. They will need to learn collaborative behaviors such as active listening, attending to others' points of view, showing respect through civil communication, and just talking things through. Also, collaborative attitudes such as being non-judgmental and accepting of others' points of view and trust in the process must be developed and nurtured. It is important that people assume that others are doing the best they can and their intent is good.

Further Research

This study succeeded in developing insights into the processes and dynamics of interprofessional collaboration. There is much work to be done if we are to progress in this area as individuals and society. One major area for future research involves studying how a culture of collaboration gets passed on to the next generation of professionals. What knowledge, skills, and attitudes must be manifested and articulated to carry on the work?

A second question involves the transferability of this study's findings to other contexts. I am currently the team leader of on interprofessional team committed to changing how pain management is practiced at our hospital. I do find that the basic elements identified in this study apply to my situation. It would be interesting to learn if this is the case in other collaborative alliances. Do they experience the same dynamics as

the Newmark partners? What is the role of relationship and how does relationship develop? What sorts of practices are in place to foster the development of relationship? Do the individuals involved have a sense of the struggle between autonomy and interdependence? If yes, what does it feel like and how does it manifest itself? And, what about trust and respect? Are these elements as important in other collaborations and they were in this project?

And third, how has this integrated service delivery model impacted the life of the clients who are served by the Newmark Center professionals? One of the initial motivations for change was the partners' frustration with duplication of services, redundancy, and inefficiency of the old system. Do the clients perceive and experience a change? Is it better or are some things worse? But, mainly, how has it changed their lives? Are the clients a part of the collaborative process?

Implications for education and organization leaders point to the need for the institutionalization of collaboration as a way of working towards integrative solutions to the complex problems society and education face. Leaders need to model collaborative behaviors in the classrooms and the boardrooms. A knowledge of the interpersonal dynamics that occur in the development and fostering of relationships should be an essential component of staff development and ongoing professional education and training. Physical structures should be in place to provide opportunities for people from different departments and functional areas to work together. And, time should be understood as a critical element in the process. It takes time to develop trust, respect, and relationships. Communication is the vehicle. Methods of communication and behaviors that promote the development and maintenance of trust, respect, and consequently,

relationship can be taught and learned. Leaders need to show the way through modeling, mentoring, and performance expectation.

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